Indian Historical Studies Series

ORIYA NATIONALISM

Quest for a United Orissa 1866-1956

Nivedita Mohanty





Prafulla



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1866-1956

Nivedita Mohanty received her Ph.D. in History from Heidelberg University, Germany. Earlier, a faculty under the Utkal University; a post-doctoral fellow at IIT, Kharagpur; and a Senior Research Fellow of the Indian Council of Historical Research, she has subsequently been a freelancer primarily researching the regional history of India. Her current studies relate to the cultural identity of the Oriyas including those of the diaspora; as well as the socio-cultural history of Jharkhand.

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Preface to the Second Edition

After more than two decades I have decided to go in for the second edition of my book, 'Oriya Nationalism: Quest for a United Orissa, 1866-1936', as it had gone out of print.

Since the integration of the Orissa princely states has had an appreciable impact on the Oriya movement I have thought it appropriate to include a new chapter, 'Formation of an Enlarged Orissa: Merger of the Princely States' in this edition. As a result, a change in the title of the section, 'Epilogue' of the first edition and some alterations in its earlier content have become necessary. The saga of Oriya nationalism as covered in this edition would now span twenty more years, i.e. till 1956, which would witness the final phase of the quest for a united Orissa in the twentieth century.

During the last decade of my stay in Singhbhum, I have had the opportunity to observe the ruling families of some of the former princely states of Orissa, in particular that of Seraikella, from close quarters. This experience has helped me appreciate their perspective of the merger; the anguish they endured during the transition; as well as some of the complexity of the issues involved. Further, I am convinced that although the epithet, 'the dark terrain', is apt for some of them, many of these houses also made enormous contributions towards enriching the heritage of Orissa. However, I am conscious of the fact that the socio-cultural traditions of these princely states in itself would merit an independent volume and have therefore desisted from a comprehensive treatment of the subject. Instead, an attempt has been made to study the salient features of the Orissa princely order under the British; their relationship with the main province of Orissa and the subsequent developments leading to their eventual merger with Orissa or other provinces.

The private papers made available from the Seraikella palace and the information gleaned through personal interactions with members of the former ruling houses as well as prominent personalities, have helped me immensely while compiling the new chapter on the princely states. Additionally, the related papers in the India Office Library London; Nehru Memorial Museum & Library New Delhi; Parliament Library New Delhi; Orissa State Archives Bhubaneswar; Tata Steel Archives Jamshedpur and in the various personal collections, newspapers, journals and the printed books constitute the main source materials for this chapter. I express my indebtedness to the management of these institutions and to a number of friends I made during the course of my study who directly or indirectly contributed to this work.

When the first edition of the book appeared, there was possibly no other volume dealing with the subject of Oriya nationalism at the grassroots level. It is heartening to see a number of publications dealing with some of the sub-aspects outlined in the book in the mean time. It is hoped that the subject of Oriya nationalism and its various ramifications will continue to receive the attention it deserves.

Nivedita Mohanty
July 2005

Foreword

Indian nationalism and the movements inspired by a quest for regional and linguistic identity often supported each other, but sometimes they also were at cross-purposes and posed a dilemma for leaders who were sincerely devoted to both causes. The Oriya movement provides an interesting example of this situation. It brought about a literary and educational awakening without which the message of nationalism would not have reached the people of this region. But it was initially a movement of emancipation from dominance by stronger neighbours rather than from British rule and in its later stages its demand for a separate province did not fit in well with the All-India strategy of the National Congress. Nevertheless this movement claimed the loyalty of all those nationalists who were convinced that only a regenerated Orissa which could rise to its full stature would make a contribution to the cause of Indian nationalism. The regeneration of Orissa was not immediately linked with the demand for a separate province. In fact, this demand emerged only after earlier attempts at consolidating all Oriya-speaking tracts under the administration of one or the other of the larger British-Indian provinces had been frustrated. Separation was then claimed with the bitter awareness that some Oriya-speaking tracts would not be included in the new province. This claim was raised at an inopportune moment from the point of view of the leaders of the Indian National Congress who had hoped to conciliate Muslim opinion by agreeing to the formation of a separate province of Sindh and were embarrassed at the neutralization of this concession by the creation of a separate Orissa. Eventually the British rulers made their decision so as to confirm the apprehensions of the Congress leaders thus holding the balance between Muslim and Hindu interests. For the Oriya leaders this crucial period was one of trial and tribulation as they were isolated from the mainstream

of Congress politics, but wished to continue to serve the national movement.

Regional support of national leadership was an important feature of the Indian freedom movement. Gandhi had recognized this by redrafting the Constitution of the Indian National Congress so as to accommodate the aspirations of various regions. Orissa had also been given its place in this constitution, and it had valiantly supported Gandhi in his national campaigns. The current of the Oriya movement thus merged with the main-stream of nationalism and this fusion proved to be stronger than temporary isolation and alienation. Those leaders of the Oriya movement who looked to the British for a response to their claims were replaced by younger ones who were attached to the Congress although the British creation of a separate province of Orissa in 1936 seemed to justify the attitude of the older leadership.

Nivedita Mohanty has traced the evolution of the Oriya movement in this thesis with great care and has provided a detailed account of the reflection of the movement in the various tracts of Orissa. The Oriya newspapers which served as source material for this thesis are themselves harbingers of the awakening of Orissa and thus deserve the attention which has been given to them in this pioneering work. The intensive study of the borderline areas between the core of Orissa and the neighbouring provinces is of particular importance and should stimulate research in other regions. Bilingual tracts in which different regional traditions produce conflicts as well as a variety of interesting contacts are to be found in many parts of India. Their problems have rarely found the sympathetic and yet dispassionate attention which Nivedita Mohanty has devoted to Ganjam, Sambalpur, Midnapur and Singhbhum.

The study of the regional tradition of Orissa which was the aim of the Orissa Research Project of the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University has found a modern supplement in this

excellent thesis. Nivedita Mohanty came first to Heidelberg when this project was in its formative stage and the members of the project benefited much from her help. At this time the idea matured that she would make her own independent contribution to the interpretation of the Orissa tradition by writing this thesis on the Oriya movement. Several years of research work in India and a second visit to Heidelberg contributed to the realization of this idea, and the South Asia Institute is proud to present this book in its series of publications.

Dietmar Rothermund

Heidelberg, November 1978

Abbreviation

AA, Asa
GB, Gadajata Basini
ISC, Indian Statutory Commission
OHRJ, Orissa Historical Research Journal
OSPC, Orissa States Peoples'Conference
PA, Prajatantra
PUS, Proceedings of the Utkala Sammilani
SH, Sambalpur Hitaisini
SJ, Samaj
SS, Satya Samachara
SRC, States Reorganisation Commission
UD, Utkala Dipika
US, Utkala Sahitya
UUC, Utkal Union Conference

Introduction to the First Edition

Orissa remained an enigma to the outsiders for long since no serious effort was made to place its history in proper focus till very recent times. This neglect by the scholars could partly be linked up with the fact that this land and its people had receded into oblivion for almost three centuries following the decay of its powerful Hindu dynasty in 1568. Orissa, once a much famed and powerful centre of the Hindus was therefore reduced to a terra incognita. The 19th century saw a few sporadic attempts to shed some light on the people and heritage of Orissa. Most of these, however, suffered from a lack of objectivity. It is only during the last two decades that serious endeavours have been made to put things in their proper perspective.

The present study is an attempt to analyse the development of Oriya nationalism, which constitutes a major aspect of the modern Orissan history. The British occupied Orissa in 1803. Within just over half a century of this event, around the year 1866, the symptoms of Oriya nationalism became well discernible. It might appear a little queer that a cruel famine that visited this region during 1865-1866 and which left in its trail untold miseries and devastation should have also led to circumstances which eventually aroused nationalistic consciousness among the Oriyas. These feelings slowly but steadily grew into a phenomenon embracing the whole of the Oriya land and culminated in the constitution of most of the Oriya-speaking areas into a separate administrative province in the year 1936. The events spanning the seventy years between 1866 and 1936 naturally form the focus of the present analysis. However, the years preceding the period have also been considered in an attempt to place the birth and growth of Oriya nationalism in its proper perspective. In the pre-famine era, the British Government and various missionaries operating in Orissa

attempted, albeit in a limited way, to establish printing presses and educational institutions chiefly to introduce English education into this tract. This in its own way prepared the ground for the growth of nationalistic feelings in later years.

Such nationalistic feelings in the regional context were not peculiar to Orissa alone. It was a natural sentiment flowing freely in a number of regions of India and brought about administrative reorganisation in various parts at various times. What is however interesting is that the circumstances which conditioned these feelings and the course and strategy of the agitation for achieving the goal---that of a separate administrative unit for a particular community, are varied in nature. As to the genesis of these feelings, it is generally accepted that the renaissance in the 19th century ushered in a general progress in the realm of education and in particular led to the development of vernacular literature that in turn contributed appreciably towards a revival of various cultural groups. Interestingly, the very nature of the political-administrative units into which the British Government divided this country, also helped strengthen the regional nationalism. To elucidate this point---the large divisions of British India into presidencies were mere conglomerations of more than one cultural group wherein it so happened that one particular cultural or linguistic group enjoyed many more privileges than the other constituent groups. This constantly made the minority groups aware of the plight of their community, which logically developed into deep undercurrents of 'individual' nationalistic feeling.

Clearly, therefore, the study of a regional nationalism, say that of the Oriyas, in all its details cannot achieve its end if it is treated in isolation. Instead, a true and objective appraisal of the situation can be made only when one is aware of the traits that various other important regional nationalism possessed, so that the peculiarities of each may be brought to the focus and in this background, the characteristic features of the Oriya nationalism

may be well comprehended. With this end in view an analysis of the development of nationalistic feelings in some regions in the British India or afterwards has been attempted.

Perhaps the most significant movement fuelled by a sense of regional nationalism that was evident in the British India, was that of Bengal. It was significant because at one stage, the Indian nationalism virtually identified itself with that of Bengal.[1] Bengal's nationalist agitation did not seek a separate province for the Bengali-speaking people; indeed it was opposed to carving out the separate administrative unit of Bihar and Orissa from the Bengal Presidency in 1912.[2] The Bengali nationalism stormed into action after the announcement of the partition of Bengal in 1905. This partition evoked the sympathy of leaders from all over India and it is common knowledge now how the Indian National Congress vehemently decried the step taken by the Government. It did not take long for the people of Bengal to be reunited and this came to be regarded as a triumph for Bengali nationalism in particular and the linguistic nationalism in general. How the province was partitioned again in 1947 with India achieving its freedom is a different story, but it can be said that at no stage did the currents of Bengal nationalism run counter to the main stream of Indian nationalism.

In Bihar the nationalist struggle ventilating the aspirations of the local people seems to have grown out of a sense of being discriminated against in the fields of education, commerce and service. Such sentiments were a natural sequel to the advantageous position that the Bengali community found themselves in throughout the Presidency as a result of their earlier association with the British system of education and administration. The nationalistic feeling among the educated middle class Biharis is said to have surfaced as early as 1871 when the census figures brought to focus in a tell-tale manner their backwardness.[3] Their leaders addressed themselves first to the task of getting the

grievances redressed in the existing administrative set-up and finding this an uphill job in the midst of the intermediary rulers started demanding a separate province for them in the subsequent stages.[4] The strategy, they thought appropriate for achieving their goal, was one of keeping the British overlords sympathetically disposed towards their cause.[5] To satisfy this objective, it was considered injudicious by them to get involved in the anti-partition movement in 1905.[6] However, after 1912, when their purpose was achieved, Bihar did not hesitate to join the Indian national movement against the British.[7]

The nationalist struggle of the Andhras appears to have been caused by several factors. The entire Telugu-speaking population, that is, the Andhra community had been placed under the Madras Presidency during the British rule and the Andhras felt that they were handicapped because it was the Tamilians who were having a lion's share in matters relating to education, service and commerce.[8] This thwarted aspirations of the Telugus gave rise to a nationalism based on language and their feelings became stronger in the late 19th century when the flow of western ideas and education started coming in.[9] With the growth and development of the vernacular literature they felt increasingly conscious of their distinctiveness. This received further impetus during the Swadeshi movement of 1903 when an all India cry was raised against the injustice done to the Bengali-speaking population.[10] The separation in 1912 of Bihar and Orissa from the Bengal Province gave a fillip to the Andhra nationalism to seek a separate identity for itself.[11] Though the Andhra leaders were buttressing their individual cause, they also remained deeply associated throughout with the Indian Congress movement. They appealed to the central leadership of Congress to grant a separate provincial circle of Congress for the Andhras.[12] The Andhra Mahasabha, essentially a nationalist organisation of the Andhras, was subordinate to their provincial Congress Circle.[13] The leaders of Andhra favoured that the general administrative units of India be chalked out on the basis of language[14] and expected to gain as

a result of such reorganisation. The formation of the provinces of Orissa and Sind in 1936 provided the leaders of Andhra nationalism with an opportunity to substantiate their claim further. It was now advocated that if two deficit provinces could be constituted, there should be no economic barrier to the formation of a much wealthier Andhra province.[15] The struggle of the Andhras was crowned with success when they were awarded a separate province — the first to be formed on linguistic basis in free India — in 1956.

Regional nationalism based on language was in evidence in many other provinces too and in fact led to the formation of several new provinces such as Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat and Maharashtra,[16] the details of which fall beyond the framework of the present study.

However, the case of the Punjabi Suba movement and the ultimate constitution of a separate province of the Punjab in 1966 present interesting points for analysis while examining the characteristic features of various regional nationalism. Here was a case where, it is thought, religious or linguistic sentiments were not churned up so much by genuine mutual distrust or aversion as by political elements keen to establish their credibility among the people.[17] It is pointed out that the Punjabis did not suffer any serious handicap in the province with the Hindi-speaking people as partners. Gradually, however, the political parties whipped up religious and linguistic emotions. The Government did not feel comfortable to see communal troubles between Hindus and Sikhs flare up in a border state. Consequently they agreed to constitute two provinces. Some argue that the granting of the claim for the Punjabi Suba "is a reward to the Sikhs for their courageous contribution during the 22nd fateful days of Indo-Pakistan conflict in September 1965."[18]

The case of the Oriya nationalist struggle presents many a distinctive feature when observed in the background of the other regional movements. The land of Orissa did not come under the British sway all at a time. Instead, it was a piecemeal process

during which different portions constituting the former terrain were annexed at different times and were scattered among various administrative units. Thus the politico-administrative set-up of the land went through a complete structural disintegration. Significantly, however, the administrative fragmentation could not snap the thread of cultural affinity which ran through these areas and which had once bound the people of this land together.

The nationalist sentiments were engendered initially as a reaction to the insuperable handicap the Oriyas were facing in all spheres of life, in every province where they survived only as insignificant minorities. In addition, the Oriyas faced the risk of total extinction of their mother tongue even in their mainland. Gradually therefore the Oriya nationalism turned strongly language-oriented and the leaders realised that they must remain united under one administration so as to be able to combat any danger to their language. Later on it was felt that, their status being what it was, it would be well nigh impossible to maintain their separate identity if the Oriya areas were merely amalgamated under one of the existing provinces. Subsequently, the agitation was directed towards an independent administrative identity as well as amalgamation. In the initial stages, the educated elites, landlords and the feudatory chiefs championed the cause of the Oriya national movement. It was only afterwards that a wider cross-section of the society joined in. The strategy of most of the Oriya leaders was to adopt a policy of appeasement towards the British in the beginning.

However, when the All India Congress gave indications of dealing favourably with the issue of linguistic provinces, they were divided into two camps: one remaining pro-British referred to as the moderates and the other, the extremists, aligning themselves with the Congress. Finally, the fulfilment of the nationalistic aspiration in this region in 1936 heralded a process which is rather contemporary in scope. It was perhaps more a fortuitous happening than anything else that the chain reaction resulting in the formation of distinct linguistic regions was to begin with Orissa. The formation of Orissa also coincided with

the carving out of a Muslim province, Sindh -- thus giving rise to the doubt whether a separate Orissa was not created only to appease the Hindus. Whether the creation of Orissa played any significant role in the future division on linguistic basis or in the Hindu-Muslim relation during the subsequent years, is however issues which again are beyond the scope of the present work.

There are a multitude of facets to the story of nationalism in this region and some of them have been dealt with by a few scholars. However, the popular side of the movement which assumed a distinct shape at the grassroots level and expressed itself through various sections of the society, through individual organisations, periodicals and such other media, had so far been ignored. The activities of a group of important leaders who played decisive roles in shaping the destiny of the province have not been analysed so far in an integrated manner although a host of biographical studies have been made. In addition, the previous attempts also did not illuminate the relationship between nationalism in the regional and central context that, as has been pointed out already, is recognised to be one of the important aspects of the present work. The various steps taken by the British Government in connection with the formation of the Orissa province have been comprehensively dealt with by scholars basing their work on the official records, and therefore have not been elaborately discussed in the current study. In order to comprehend the development of nationalism in Orissa, the present work begins with a brief sketch of the ancient history of the land. The excursion focuses the cultural unity that the Oriyas possessed which made them a distinct cultural group and also brings to surface the fact that this thread of unity amazingly continued in spite of all the vivisections following the foreign conquests.

The sense of oneness among the Oriyas received further impetus in the 19th century. Such a sign was indicative of the spirit of the age, for it was during the same time that nationalism as a force had come to operate in many parts of the world. In Orissa the various factors which contributed to the rising sense

of unity included the growth of education, the urge to preserve the Oriya language from annihilation, the publication of numerous periodicals and newspapers, the rapidly growing consciousness of the youth about the backwardness of their region, the development of communication, and the interest shown by the authorities to ameliorate the prevailing condition. Oriyas started aspiring for their territorial unification on the basis of their cultural and linguistic homogeneity. During the same time India as a whole was also going through a process of revival in learning that in turn strengthened the spirit of nationalism. It would begin its struggle to redeem the territory from the domination of the foreign power. Oriya nationalism, therefore, can make an interesting reading when analysed in the context of Indian nationalism. These are the aspects, which have been dealt with in the second chapter.

The third chapter looks into the agitation in Sambalpur in western Orissa that was tagged up with the Central Provinces. The political unification of Sambalpur with Orissa in 1905 marked the first successful step towards fulfilling the nationalistic aspirations of the Oriyas and could thus be considered a turning point in the course of the movement.

The Oriya nationalist struggle received definite direction from some of its leaders, the most eminent of whom was Madhusudan Das. Madhusudan sought to bring the Oriyas back into reckoning through improvements of their socio economic condition and for this purpose introduced a number of innovative institutions. This forms the main theme of the fourth chapter. The next chapter deals with an analysis of Madhusudan's activities on the political scene. He became the motivating force behind the formation of the Utkal Union Conference in 1903. This organisation turned out to be the forum for expressing the aspirations of the Oriyas and came to be identified as the single most important phenomenon in their life. The stimuli that the Utkal Union Conference created in the Oriya society, soon found response

from the people and inspired the formation of a host of other fraternities, which also catered to the growth of the nationalistic feelings. It has been thought important to examine and incorporate here the roles of the various cross-section of the society -- the intellectuals, the students, the women and the scheduled castes -- who were drawn into the whirlpool of the movement. This chapter also includes the emergence of another important leader, Gopabandhu Das who made an immediate impact on the people with his deep sympathy for the cause of the poor and the downtrodden. His singular devotion to the uplift of the people of Orissa included both social and educational fronts. The middle school at Satyavadi in 1909 that was his creation is considered a great innovation in the field of imparting education where the students were taught to build their lives in the noble tradition of India without secluding themselves from the modern thoughts wafting from the west.

Both Gopabandhu and Madhusudan contributed richly to the national life of Orissa. These two leaders were, however, to be identified with two distinct streams of movement that characterised an important epoch in the nationalistic struggle in Orissa. Although Madhusudan Das was an active member of the Congress in the beginning, he chose to part ways with it and saw merit in getting the grievances of the Oriyas redressed through the blessings of the British rulers. Gopabandhu Das and his followers on the other hand were first and foremost committed to the task of achieving freedom for the country through the Congress and were strong advocates of accommodating the aspirations of the Oriya people within the main fold of the country's interest. Interestingly, however, both groups endeavoured at the outset, to propagate their views through the channels of the Utkal Union Conference and in a trial of strength at the Chakradharpur session of the Conference (1920-21) the group led by Gopabandhu came out victorious.

Although Gopabandhu Das and his main followers saw a perfect harmony between their loyalties to Orissa and to the country at large, there were several occasions when a conflict came to the surface. For example, in the wake of the Nehru Committee Report, the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Boundary Commission Report, issue of White Paper and finally after the announcement of the report of the Joint Select Committee on the separation of Orissa, the difference of opinion between these two sections was very much in evidence. Apart from highlighting the interaction between the regional nationalism with the one at the central level, this chapter also deals with the views of Gandhiji on Oriya nationalism and attempts to assess his impact on this issue.

The movement in the outlying Oriya-speaking areas is a striking feature of the Oriya nationalism. The sixth chapter describes how the agitation not only took deep root in the mainland but spread its waves to the outlying Oriya-speaking areas as well, which had been politically integrated with other administrative units. Each of these important tracts, Sambalpur, Ganjam, Midnapore and Singhbhum presents situations unique to it and has therefore merited separate attention.

The Oriya nationalism initially aimed at linguistic and cultural unity. It desired the amalgamation of Oriya-speaking areas under a single existing administrative unit. This aspiration was, however, frustrated in various ways, and subsequently the separation of Orissa emerged as a demand. These two apparently complementary aspects became controversial issues when the Government put priority on the separation. This led to a disagreement among the Oriyas; with some demanding amalgamation only, for, to them separation implied a 'Smaller Orissa'. The others thought that accepting the separate Orissa was a more pragmatic approach; for, the aspiration of the amalgamation of the entire Oriya-speaking areas seemed utopian. This has been discussed in detail in the last chapter.

The present study includes the birth and development of the Oriya nationalism and tries to focus on some of its striking features in detail. It does not encompass the happenings after 1936, namely an in-depth study of the merger of the feudatory states. However, some general observations have been made in the epilogue on the political scene in the post-separation Orissa on the basis of the relationship between the different factions that emerged during the course of the Oriya national movement.

Various manuscripts and administrative records, journals, magazines and newspapers as also printed books are mentioned in the bibliography which together constitute the source materials.

They were traced in the India Office Library, London; South Asia Institute Library, Heidelberg; National Library, Calcutta; Indian Institute of Technology Library, Kharagpur; Town Library, Midnapore; the State Archives, Bhubaneswar; Utkala Gauraba Madhusudan Library, Cuttack and in some personal collections.

This work was taken up as a Ph.D. programme with the recommendation and under the guidance of Professor Dr. Dietmar Rothermund, Head of the Department of History, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg. I acknowledge my indebtedness to Prof. Rothermund for his valuable and helpful suggestions. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge my gratefulness to Dr. Hermann Kulke for his help and advice in the compilation of this work. To the friends in South Asia Institute I am grateful for their cheerful cooperation. I express my sincerest gratitude to the staff of the earlier mentioned libraries who helped me in my collection of materials. I thank the authorities of the South Asia Institute for publishing the book in their series. Last but not least, I am grateful to my husband and our little son without whose co-operation and sacrifice, the work could not have been completed.

Nivedita Mohanty
June 1982

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

Early History and the Hindu Period

The pre-history of Orissa, like the history of all ancient peoples, rests heavily on the fables and legends and as such maintains an aura of haziness around it. The earliest human inhabitants of the land of Orissa are said to have belonged to the non-Aryan stock whose descendants are still to be found in the mountainous terrain. They were subsequently pushed out into the background by the Aryans who slowly migrated to the land and spread their influence here as they had been doing in Northern India. Isolated by geographical barriers of hilly areas and the Bay of Bengal and helped by a material sufficiency gifted by the fertility of the soil, they gradually shaped themselves into an independent unit of distinctive character.

Orissa enjoyed a unique position in the geography of India. Lying between the hills and the sea, she was the gateway between the North and the South. "Guarding the seas, she was the gateway between India and the Indian Archipelago and Far East. As a result of this strategic position, Kalinga (Orissa) played a vital role in the cultural fusion of the North and the South as well as in the maritime trade and the colonization of Indian Archipelago. Added to this fortunate situation she possessed favourable local circumstances. She had better climatic advantage to her credit over most parts of India. The sea provided her abundant rains; innumerable big and small rivers, flowing through the very length and breadth, rendered her a bed of alluvium. Nature's bounty gave her people ample individuality, out of which grew up a culture representing a strange mixture of the Aryans and the Dravidians."[1] Their culture enjoyed immunity for long because of their geographical situation which prevented frequent foreign encroachments.

The political geography of this land included Odra and Utkala in the Central Orissa, Kalinga in the South and South Kosala in the West. The later Vedic literature, the Buddhist Jataka stories, the Mahabharata and the Puranic scriptures give us interesting accounts of the history of these territories.

Tradition has it that Utkala, which is considered the oldest of the group, was associated with Vaivasvata Manu, one of the earliest kings of the 'Bharata Varsa'. One of his offspring Ila-Sudyumna by name, who changed his sex alternately, gave birth to numerous children, 'Utkala' being one of them. When Ila-Sudyumna divided his inheritance among his children 'Utkala' received the Utkala country, which roughly comprised Midnapore, Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts as well as the northern part of the Cuttack district region of the modern Orissa.[2]

The origin of Kalinga is also traced to Ila-Sudyumna one of whose descendants known as king Bali was ruling over the Eastern Anava realm. He was issueless and requested the blind Rishi Dirghatamas to come to their aid. Thus, through the latter, his queen Sudesna begot five sons named Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Pundra and Sumha. The Bhagavata Purana suggests that there was a sixth son too, called Odra. These six children of Bali divided among themselves the Eastern Anava -- their ancestral kingdom. The territory of Kalinga that belonged to the prince Kalinga extended as far as the Gangetic valley in the North, the Godavari in the South, the Amarkantak hills in the West and the sea in the East. The kingdom of Kalinga, which was very powerful, came to subjugate the neighbouring territories quite often.[3]

The Odradesa was bound by the river Mahanadi in the North, South Tosali in the East, Daksina Kosala in the West and its extent to the South went in irregular lines as far as the Parlakimedi region.[4]

The region which came to be known as South Kosala consisted of some states of Orissa bordering Sambalpur like Patna, Bamanda, Sonepur and Redhakhol.

These geographical boundaries, however, were not fixed once and for all, and in course of time went through much change.

The kingdom of Utkala expanded in years to come and touched the river Mahanadi. Gradually it absorbed Odradesa and subsequently both tribes merged into one. Kalinga too became very powerful. However, an internecine struggle between the two royal dynasties followed within the Kalinga kingdom and there emerged a new kingdom called Kangoda, which comprised Southern Puri and the district of Ganjam.[5] In course of time, a gradual fusion took place between Utkala and Kalinga forging them into a single state.

The dynastic history of Orissa earlier to 4th century B.C. is shrouded in darkness. Only the puranic tradition records that when thirty-two kings of Kalinga had reigned, Mahapadma Nanda arose and exterminated all the Kshatriyas.[6] "This evidently suggests that between the period of the Mahabharata war (11th century B.C.) and the conquest of Northern India by Mahapadma Nanda of Magadha (4th century B.C.), thirty-two, kings had reigned in Kalinga."[7] The Nandas were succeeded by the Mauryas in Kalinga in 3rd century B.C. Orissa assumed great importance during the reign of a 'Chedi' king known as Kharavela in 1st century B.C. The history of Orissa in the following period remains rather obscure, though historians have tried to trace it through various numismatic evidences. However, the important dynasties, which held sway after that, were Satavahanas until the 2nd century A.D., then the Sailodbhavas. Then came the Bhauma-Karas around 8th century A.D. The Samovamsi dynasty that succeeded them in the 10th century A.D. came to occupy a very important place in the history of Oriya culture. They built the famous Lingaraj temple at Bhubaneswar and patronised Saivism.

The emergence of the Eastern Gangas in the early 12th century brought about a significant turn in the history of Orissa. Anantavarma Chodagangadev united the territories of Kalinga and Utkala into one political entity which entailed a chain of events in the society.[8] A great solidarity in thought was generated out of this union and it is even said that around this time the true Oriya language took birth.[9] Chodaganga's construction of the

monumental Jagannath temple knit the Oriyas further into cultural unity and henceforth Jagannath was to be recognised as the symbol of the Oriyas. Chodaganga was responsible too in curtailing the importance of Kalinga and giving prominence to Odradesa by shifting his capital from Kalinganagar to Cuttack an act, which led to the modern name of Odisa.[10]

The Gangas were succeeded by the 'Surya' dynasty, the founder of which was said to be a commoner, Kapilendradev. He was the most illustrious king of the dynasty who carried on numerous successful expeditions beyond the frontiers and expanded the boundaries of Orissa from the Ganga to the Pennar (near Madras in South India) and consolidated the position of Orissa in the Indian scene. Meanwhile, Orissa had virtually come to the zenith in the spheres of painting, sculpture, art, architecture and literature and was basking in a greatly enriched culture. Her fame and wealth had started reaching the people beyond her territories and they were spontaneously attracted. But the last king of the 'Surya' dynasty called Prataparudradev (1497-1534 A.D.) preferred to devote most of his time to worship and religious ceremonies under the influence of the great Vaisnava preacher Sri Chaitanya, which weakened the military strength of the once powerful dynasty.

This encouraged the neighbouring rulers, who had been seeking opportunities to attack Orissa. In 1509 A.D. while Prataparudra was in the far-off south, Ismail Ghazi, the commander of the Sultan of Bengal, invaded Orissa, came right up to Puri and plundered the city.[11] The priests of Jagannath took the images to the Chilika lake where they were concealed.[12] However, Prataparudra thwarted the attack after his return. In the south, the king of Vijayanagar grabbed the territory to the south of the river Krishna between 1514-1516. The Golconda Sultan Quli Qutub Sahi also occupied the territories between the Godavari and Krishna in 1522.[13]

These events during the reign of Prataparudra brought to the surface the decay that had set in and there was no force to stem this rot. On the contrary, there followed a succession of internecine struggle, which accelerated the ruin of the Hindu empire.

Prataparudra was succeeded by his minister Govinda Vidyadhar in 1541-42 who killed his master's two young sons and founded the Bhoi dynasty which was however destined to be the last independent Hindu dynasty in Orissa.

Orissa under the Muslims and Mughals

Mukundadev, the last independent Hindu king was attacked in 1560 by enemies from both southern and northern fronts. He believed that an alliance with the Emperor Akbar would help him push back the aggression of the Sultan of Bengal and of Golconda and accordingly signed a treaty with the Mughal Emperor in 1564-65. However, help from Delhi did not flow in at the time of need.

In 1568, Sulaiman Karrani of Bengal marched up to the banks of the Ganga and drove Mukundadev southwards where he was killed. Thus, Orissa passed into the hands of the Afghans.

When the capital of Orissa was overrun by the Afghans from the North, the South was also lying open and unprotected. In 1511, the Kutbshahi dynasty of Golconda ruled by Ibrahim IV, attacked from the south and conquered the Chicacole Sircar. Consequently, Ganjam, which formed part of the Chicacole Sircar, came under the rule of the Kutbshahis. It marked the beginning of the territorial dismemberment of Orissa, for Ganjam was thenceforth to remain apart from Orissa for as long as 365 years. Yet during all these years Ganjam was able to retain much of its original culture and as the subsequent pages would reveal, was to struggle to come back to Orissa when the Oriya nationalism got a strong foothold.

However, with the death of Sulaiman Karrani, Orissa became the scene of conflict between the forces of the Mughal Emperor

and those of the Subedar of Bengal. In 1573, Daud Khan the son of Sulaiman broke off his allegiance to the Emperor and declared independence. The Imperial forces defeated him and ultimately killed him in 1575 and Orissa was annexed to the Mughal Empire.

The Afghans would not however rest in peace and rose in frequent revolts. In order to weed them out finally, Raja Mansingh was despatched by Akbar in 1590. Mansingh brought along Bihar and Bengal armies, destroyed the enemy power, and proceeded as far as Khurda where a Ramachandradev had carved out a small principality in his name.

Ramachandradev, the son of the Minister of the founder of the Bhoi dynasty had suffered at the hands of Mukundadev[14] and had lost his throne to him. Since then, he had been looking for opportunities to regain his throne. The destruction of the images in the Jagannath temple by the Muslims in 1558[15] disheartened the Hindus all over the country. When Mansingh defeated the Muslims Ramachandradev realised that an opportune moment had come when he could exploit the sentiment of the Hindus. He got a strong fort built at Khurda in Puri district where the deity of Jagannath was consecrated and styled himself as the king of Orissa.[16] Mansingh, the astute politician that he was, recognised the sovereignty of Ramachandradev. Consequently, a new dynasty emerged which in fact claimed its lineage from the earlier Hindu dynasties and remained the sole proprietor of the Jagannath temple. Ramachandradev proclaimed himself the 'Gajapati king' of Orissa and the people accepted him as their ruler.[17]

The Mughal territory in Orissa in the north included Tamluk and Midnapore.[18] Akbar's Orissa made the first dismemberment of the Oriya land in the North by taking away Hugli and its ten dependent Mahals (small estates) and joining them with Bengal.[19] During the time of Shah Jahan, Cuttack, Bhadark and Jaleswar divisions of the Mughal Orissa were further subdivided for the

convenience of the revenue collection. Jaleswar was divided into seven divisions i.e., Soro, Remuna, Basta, Jaleswar, Maljeteah, Gaul Parah and Muskurin and 127 Mahals, and excepting Soro, the rest of the territories were de linked from Orissa and added to Bengal along with the port of Balasore and the Nilagiri hills.[20] In 1706-1707 further territorial fragmentation took place when Hijli and Tamluk with some other parganas (a tract of land comprising many villages) were taken away from Orissa and added to Benga1.[21]

After Aurangzeb in 1707, the Mughal throne lost its strength and vitality. As a result, Governors of many provinces declared themselves independent. During these years, Mursid Quli Khan became the Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Subedar of Orissa. A further change took place in the political geography of Orissa when Mursid Quli Khan, for the sake of financial convenience separated Midnapore from Orissa and annexed it to Bengal.[22] In 1728, the six divisions of Jaleswar which had been taken away to Bengal were re-added by Shujauddin Mohammad Khan to Orissa along with the port of Balasore.[23]

By 1740, Alivardi Khan due to some conspiracy on his part became the Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and appointed his second son-in-law Sayyid Ahmmed Khan as the (Deputy) Governor of Orissa.[24] Alivardi Khan's rule witnessed repeated Maratha raids under its leader Raghuji Bhonsle, the Raja of Nagpur. The frequent battle between the two parties exhausted them and they settled for peace.[25]

The peace terms were signed into a treaty in 1751 which pointed out that Mir Habib was to be regarded as a servant of Alivardi and would rule over Orissa on his behalf.[26] He would be expected, however, to spend the surplus revenue of the province for the payment of arrears to Raghuji's troops. The Marathas were bound by the terms not to invade Bengal any more and in return, the Nawab Alivardi was to pay Raghuji a sum of rupees 12 lakhs

annually. Orissa as far as the Subarnarekha River on the North would be ceded to the Marathas and they were expected not to set their foot on the other side of that river. Subarnarekha became the boundary line between Orissa and Bengal.

The constitutional status of Orissa under this treaty was rather peculiar. The Naib Nizam (Mir Habib) of Orissa was appointed formally by Alivardi, but the latter had no authority over the functioning of his subordinate since Mir Habib was an agent of the Marathas. The treaty was acceptable as a triangular compromise amongst three sets of forces in the name of Raghuji, Mir Habib and Alivardi; to Raghuji for money, Mir Habib for honour, and to Alivardi for the rest without being unmindful of retaining his nominal overlordship over Orissa.[27] Even so, the Marathas now became the de facto rulers of Orissa.

In the battle of Plassey in 1757, it was established that the Nawab of Bengal was a puppet in the hands of the East India Company. The troops of the East India Company were stationed in various districts including Midnapore.

In 1761, the Maratha Governor in Orissa demanded from the Nawab of Bengal the agreed sum to be paid to him. The Nawab, at the instance of the English refused the payment, whereupon the Maratha Governor invaded Midnapore but retreated quickly when he came to know of the presence of an English army in the territory. The English persuaded the Nawab to retaliate who refused to do so.[28]

In 1765, the East India Company secured from the Mughal Emperor the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. By Orissa, however, was meant Midnapore i.e., only the territories up to the river Subarnarekha.[29] Beyond this to the south, laid the main land of Orissa still under the Maratha suzerainty.

This was not a desirable situation for the English. They soon realised that the control of Orissa by the Marathas beyond the border of Midnapore was a source of perpetual danger. Further, it was an obstacle in the free communication between their

northern and southern territories. They were anxious to dislodge the Maratha rulers from Orissa who were also making frequent incursions into territories well inside the northern portion of the river Subarnarekha. The English knew that the Muslim Governor of Bengal was not in a position to meet the demand for the 'agreed money' by the Naib Nazim of Orissa. They approached the latter for the cessation of Orissa to them in lieu of a stipulated annual sum.[30] The Bhonsles however did not agree as they wanted to take the best advantage of the situation.

However, very soon there was a friction between the Bhonsles and the Peswas in which the former were overwhelmingly defeated. This was followed by years of internecine strife in the Maratha court, which weakened its power. It was reflected in the mutiny that broke out in the Maratha army stationed in Orissa, and the rebellion of the local zamindars. A famine also followed the events immediately to make the situation chaotic in Orissa.[31]

In 1798, Lord Wellesley was the Company's Governor-General in India. His Subsidiary Alliance policy proved to be quite significant for Orissa. He sent a proposal to the Raja of Nagpur for the establishment of a British subsidiary force in his territories.[32] The Raja of Nagpur refused and thus invited the wrath of the Company. In 1803, the Company's troops marched into Orissa to crush the Marathas, which finally brought Orissa under their control.

Orissa under the East India Company's Administration

The Maratha possessions in Orissa that passed into the British hands were grouped under two main political divisions, namely 'Garjat' and 'Mughalbandi'. They were bounded by sea on the east, the Maratha province of Chatisgarh on the west, the Chilka Lake and Ganjam district on the south and the districts, Jaleswar, Midnapore and Birbhum on the north.[33]

'Mughalbandi' comprised the plain and open part of the country, which extended from Subarnarekha to the border of Khurda and was actually in possession of the government as the royal domain, and paid a regular assessment.[34]

The 'Garjat' included 30 states. In 1804, Khurda was annexed to the 'Mughalbandi' and in quick succession; thirteen more states were also absorbed into the 'Mughalbandi'. The remaining states constituted the tributary states of Orissa. In 1814, a magistrate was appointed with the designation of the superintendent of the Tributary Mahals to supervise the conduct of the chiefs of these states.[35]

In 1803 when the Company defeated the Marathas, the latter ceded to them along with Orissa eighteen other states on the west of Orissa, which however were subsequently returned by the Company to the Marathas in 1806. However, in the Maratha War III in 1818, the Marathas were completely outmanoeuvred and they surrendered these eighteen states to the Company. These states were placed with different political divisions one after another until 1862 when they were transferred to the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces.[36]

The Singhbhum country which had enjoyed independent status tendered its allegiance to the British in 1818.[37] The chiefs of Singhbhum (Porahat), Seraikella and Kharswan were feudatories bound, when called upon, to render service to the British Government.[38] In 1821, the Larka Kols were subdued.[39] These territories were subsequently put under the Chotanagpur division.

Thus, the territorial disintegration of Orissa, which had started much earlier than the British conquest of it, continued further under the latter's rule. By 1862, when the 18 states of the west Orissa were placed with the Central Provinces, the southern territories beyond the Chilka Lake had gone to the Madras Presidency; Singhbhum and its surrounding states had been placed with Chotanagpur division and in the north the whole of Midnapore with Jaleswar and a small part of Balasore had been transferred to Bengal.

When the British conquered Orissa they were only too conscious of the fact that Orissa had been subjected to untold exploitation and had been exposed to administrative inefficiency of worst order during the Maratha rule after having been prostrate

even for longer period under the Afghan and Mughal banditti, and as such, should be heaving a sigh of relief with their administration. However, they were destined to create more problems than they actually solved.

It was declared in 1805 that all regulations established in Bengal and Bihar should have effect in Cuttack too as it was included with the Bengal Presidency after the British conquest. Orissa was designated as the district of Cuttack then. The implementation of the Bengal regulations was done with great haste and consequently, with total disregard for the local culture and tradition. No attention was paid to educate the people in the new system, which proved extremely injurious to the process of adaptation.

The mode of judiciary and the police organisation, which were claimed to be more scientific, created a great deal of problem for the local people who were completely unaccustomed to the new bureaucracy. The common people also resented the rigidity of the law.

In the sphere of revenue administration too, even the Marathas contrary to the English belief were liberal. They did not tax the people so heavily.[40] During the British rule, however assessment of land was made without proper enquiry into the cultivable land and revenue was not equitably distributed.[41] They introduced the Bengal Revenue Regulations without any compunction, disregarding the fact that, Orissa was not a permanently settled zone like Bengal. Payment was stipulated to be made only in cash and strict punctuality was demanded.[42] Their enforcement of the use of coin in 1809 depreciated the value of the traditional currency 'Cowry' and disturbed the financial equilibrium causing a good deal of confusion.[43] The Marathas had never laid their hands on the basic trade involving commonplace food items, for example, salt, whereas the English interfered with the salt business and set up their own monopoly. As a result, this basic item disappeared to other neighbouring provinces causing untold hardships to the poor local people.[44]

To crown it all, when the Company extended Bengal regulations into Orissa, Oriya Amlas (native officer of judicial court of revenue office) and Sheristadars (record-keepers) were replaced by outsiders because of their knowledge of British regulations.[45] The outsiders were Bengalis who were brought from Bengal to fill in the void created by the ignorance of the Oriyas of the British regulations. They often took recourse to trickery aimed at acquiring landed property taking advantage of the helplessness of the Oriya proprietors. They could also persuade the dishonest British officers of the day to sell out the defaulting estates through auction in Calcutta.[46] Between the year 1806-1816, as many as 1011 estates out of the total of 2340 were taken out of possession from Oriya zamindars in this manner.[47] The common people were placed under the new zamindars, most of whom were Bengalis and came to be referred to as the intermediaries. Their ambition naturally was to enrich themselves quickly.[48] These developments meant further economic deterioration and social exploitation of the common people. The situation went on aggravating, as no remedial steps were forthcoming from the apathetic British masters.

This ultimately erupted into an open rebellion in 1817, which is often described by the Oriyas as their first War of Nationalism. Popularly known as 'Paik rebellion', this outburst was organised by the 'paiks', a kind of local militia who rose in a body against the British. Major Fletcher, who managed the estate of Khurda after the British occupation, had resumed the service lands of the 'paiks' which they had enjoyed in the days of the Hindu kings.[49] Not only that. They were subjected also to the grossest extortion and oppression at the hands of the officers to whom the government entrusted the collection of revenue and to the tyranny of a corrupt police.[50] They found their leader in Jagabandhu who was the military commander of the Raja of Khurda before the British conquered Orissa. Jagabandhu's sufferings at the hands of the government through the officers in the revenue department and the Bengali speculator Krishna

Chandra Singh had grown to unbearable proportion.[51] He had been deprived of his estate in 1813.[52] A strong party (of paiks) immediately formed round the expelled chieftain and joined their wrongs with his.[53]

In early February 1817, there was rumour of Maratha invasion when a large body of tribal people from Ghumsar, a border estate in the Ganjam district of Madras Presidency, made an incursion into Khurda with a view to plundering the English territory as an act of vengeance against the English on account of the incarceration of their Raja, Dhananjaya Bhanja.[54] The paiks of Khurda simply seized this opportunity to wreck their vengeance on the designer of their misery and joined hands with the tribal people.

The English authorities in Orissa never apprehended any uprising at Khurda, or for that matter in any other part of Orissa. They were caught unawares when they were going on complacently with their administrative reorganisation. Nevertheless, it did not take them long to quell the rebellion. However, the impact of this rebellion was far-reaching.

It exposed a unique problem in Orissa. The hazards of bringing in the intermediaries, who had virtually converted the land into their colony, came to the surface now. Ironically, Orissa had become a colony inside a colony. This was a major contributing factor in the rise of the Oriya nationalism, which would be discussed, in the following chapter.

It also revealed a significant aspect of the Oriya unity, which all along had identified its glory with that of Lord Jagannath.[55] When the rebellion started in Khurda, Mukundadev the Raja of Khurda/Puri was induced to accept the leadership. The priests in the Jagannath temple also supported the uprising.[56] All these added to the morale of the Oriya paiks who held Jagannath to be the symbol of their nationalism. It is interesting to note that for a dismembered state with many of its territories politically detached, Orissa presented an astonishing socio-cultural unity for which

Lord Jagannath played the pivotal role. The social structure of the Oriya-speaking tract was controlled by the Mukti Mandapa, headquarters of an organisation of 16 Brahmin villages around Puri and situated in the precincts of Jagannath temple.[57] The Raja of Khurda Puri represented the Lord Jagannath and therefore was the unchallenged leader and the king of the Oriyas. Thus we find, the people of the Oriya-speaking tracts, irrespective of their political/administrative units invariably mentioned the year (regnal year) of the Rajas of Khurda in their almanac, in the horoscopes of the newly born baby, in official documents like *sanads* and in the literary and other learned works.[58] The rather ill-defined aspiration of the Oriyas to remain united under the Rajas of Khurda can thus be rationalised by their close association with Lord Jagannath.[59] The Paik rebellion is accordingly interpreted as a spontaneous though premature outburst of this intensified feeling and aspiration.[60] However, it is generally recognised to have prepared the ground on which the strong foundations of the Oriya nationalism would be laid nearly half a century later.

The Paik rebellion brought in its wake a number of significant events. The missionaries who came to Orissa after 1822 worked for the riddance of illiteracy among the Oriyas. In 1823, they opened one English charity school at Cuttack.[61] The government also established one English school at Puri in 1835, which, however, closed down shortly afterwards. In the following years, the government decreed that payment of fees be waived in case of poor students, and vernacular as well as English medium schools were opened, scholarships were provided for meritorious students and Cuttack became an important centre for educational activities.[62]

The Woods' dispatch of 19 July 1854 gave an impetus to the creation of numerous educational institutions in India. In Orissa during 1858-59 the schools numbered 30 in total.[63] Although such

a number was insignificant in comparison to that in Bengal, a remarkable transformation for Orissa had begun. With modern education slowly making its way in Orissa, a different situation was emerging, which was to have a great impact on the life of the local people. The English officials now thought it proper too to offer more jobs to the sons of soil. The appointment for example, of Chaturbhuj Patnaik in 1835 as a settlement officer at Khurda[64] was in itself a noteworthy event in the national life of the Oriyas then and indicated to the local people the willingness on the part of the authorities to provide employment facilities to deserving persons from among them. A list of Oriya officers appointed around 1857 would run as follows:

Swapneswar Das, appointed as Salt Dewan of Cuttack Salt Agency, Sadananda Jachak as the head-writer of the Cuttack Collectorate, Rashbehari Patnaik as the Salt Dewan of Puri Salt Agency and Viswambhara Vidyabhusan as the Munsif at Jajpur.[65]

The availability of lucrative jobs to the local people motivated them to take keener interest in English education and prepared them to take up responsible jobs. In retrospect, therefore, it could perhaps be said that the first fifty years of the English administration though unproductive in terms of number of achievements in Orissan context, did provide the nucleus for arousing a national consciousness among the Oriyas which was to bear fruit soon.

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CHAPTER II

BIRTH OF ORIYA NATIONALISM

Nationalism as a Concept

It may be worthwhile going into the meaning of nationalism as well as its emergence in some countries before attempting to dwell at length on the theme of Oriya nationalism. It has been recognised that, largely, the word nationalism came to be used in the present sense only after the Napoleonic wars. In the year 1834, a Russian, Pletkov gave out the impression of many when he spoke of it (Narodnost) as a "new word of unclear meaning."[1] However in 1835, it was accepted by the Academic Francaise and the word rapidly gained currency everywhere. Between 1830 and in 1848 many European nation-states rose in response to the nationalist urge and by fifties almost every big city became a centre to nurse nationalism. Politicians, philosophers and other intellectuals subscribed liberally to the cause of nationalism and it gained popularity even among the masses. The Italian intellectuals for instance, touched on the Italian problem through their works of history, poetry and philosophy and these instantly endeared themselves to the common mass---an indication of their rising interest in their country. The same passion was stimulating the Germans and their literature in the 19th century spoke unequivocally of the nationalist cause. Revolutions were brewing up in Hungary, in the Scandinavian countries, in Ireland, in Poland-all heavily drawing on the sentiment of nationalism.

In the 19th century, the concept of nationalism slowly emerged on the social horizon of Orissa too. Although there was no visible 'Oriya Nation' as such, for the mainland was tagged on to the Bengal Presidency and the rest of its territories were parts of other provinces, yet a sense of oneness in culture and society started growing.

The Frenchman Buchez has, in some other context, aptly commented, "nationalism means not only the nation but also something in the virtue of which a nation continues to exist even when it has lost its autonomy."[2] This 'something' continued to work also in case of the Jews for, "... There is no other example in history of a community which has been chased round the globe quite as much which has survived its own death as a nation by two thousand years..." and yet "kept praying at the proper season for rain to fall in a country on which they have never set their eyes, drinking toasts to 'Next year in Jerusalem' during the same astronomical stretch of time..."[3] and finally succeeding in translating their dream into reality with the creation of Israel.

Nationalism in Orissa in the Context of the Indian Nationalism

The struggle of the Oriyas to achieve for themselves a political identity makes an interesting reading in the context of Indian nationalism. The 19th century Europe, notwithstanding the distance, was sending the forces of nationalism to Asia and Africa. In India, the English brought with them the enlightenment of the West and inspired the Indians to imbibe the spirit of nationalism. The formation of the Congress in 1885 provided them with a platform in due course, to mobilise their human resources and express this spirit with force. The English system of administration had nearly succeeded in giving the people a unity in law, in public administration, in finance and in education that was hitherto unknown to them and ironically enough, all this resulted in generating a sense of national unity which urged them to fight for freedom in later stages. This had its impact on Orissa too, where the nationalism veered round the narrower circle of its own predicament - that of annihilation as a distinct linguistic group.

The Oriyas were intrigued by the administrative dismemberment of the Oriya-speaking territories and were beginning to apprehend that they would soon be overrun and would be forced to lose their identity. They could no longer dismiss

the vivisection as mere political 'accidents' and were disturbed by a feeling which very nearly finds expression in the saying that, "nothing is more common than to convert accident into principle. . ."[4]

The essence of the nationalist feeling which in the context of Indian scene would indeed appear 'sub nationalistic' is not difficult to understand. Man in society has a spontaneous attachment to his culture and tradition in the midst of which he has grown up, has again, a natural predilection for his language through which he can express himself fully. Further, various other factors such as geographical proximity, natural climate, anthropological origin and historical accidents can impart homogeneity to a group. There is nothing unnatural in this development and once such a homogeneous growth has taken root, any attempt to break it up generates a spontaneous resistance.

There is no dearth of examples in history where such attempts have been made, which have caused complex problems. The union of Belgium with Holland under the House of Orange was a case in point that resulted in a sad failure. There were three million Belgians, compared to only two million Dutch and the quality of representation was looked upon as an injustice. More important was the fact that the Belgian governing class was comparatively small in number and in the Flemish countryside in particular, hardly anybody could read or write. Consequently, Belgium could not produce sufficient persons to take up jobs that are more important. Thus, the Belgo-Dutch relationship was at once poisoned by the disproportion in the number of the Civil Servants coming from the two regions. The Belgians felt they were being denied their rightful place and bitterly complained against the new regime. The kingdom of the Netherlands thus started on the wrong footing with the Belgians not quite reconciled to the artificial union, which as they felt, damaged their nationalistic aspirations. As always, the idea of amalgamation with the people of a different and

dominant race quickly tended to kindle their nationalistic feelings. Shortly afterwards, the diplomat La Moussaye summarised the position as one, in which "the Belgian hates the Dutchman and the Dutchman despises the Belgian and considers himself greatly superior."[5] The situation took a turn for the worse as William the king ordered Dutch to serve as the only administrative language throughout the country. The Belgians were not prepared to sacrifice their language and lose their distinct identity; thus, the trouble precipitated.

In India, the situation of the Oriyas was in many ways similar to that of the Belgians. In the three administrative units where Oriyas were scattered, they were forced to learn different languages, as they formed minority groups everywhere. The custom and tradition of other groups were being forced on them. Even in the mainland, they had to wage a bitter struggle for their existence as a separate homogeneous group.

"Nationalities are the products of the living forces of history and therefore fluctuating and never rigid."[6] Such being the case, many races have lost their identity at various periods of history --- some of the Latin American countries providing good examples. And in Orissa too this could have happened given the condition under which the Oriyas were living. However, there was a set of circumstances that contributed to the growth of nationalism here, which ultimately changed its fate.

The Famine of 1866 and its Impact

One such event that considerably affected the course of history in Orissa was the famine of 1865-1866. When the Oriyas were languishing culturally and morally, the dreadful famine struck the land catching both the government and the people unawares and taking a heavy toll on human lives. Apart from those perished, millions were left destitute under its impact. This famine is commonly referred to as 'Na Anka', as it visited during the 9th regnal year of the king of Puri. Some of the causes commonly

attributed for this ruthless outbreak were the failure of crops due to insufficient rainfall in 1865, shortage of food grains in the stores, lack of foresight on the part of the information machinery of the government, geographical isolation of Orissa and the apathy of the landlords.[7] Till this time Orissa had no recorded experience of any seasonal calamity of this nature. Indeed, Orissa had been a surplus region in the field of paddy production and was a regular exporter of rice.[8] However, this region lacked communication by sea and the only land route to Calcutta was intersected by large unbridged rivers making contacts almost impossible during the monsoons. It thus used to be completely cut off from the rest of the country during the rainy seasons.

By 1865, when the Great Settlement of thirty years was coming to an end the authorities had not yet decided whether any long-term or a short-term settlement would be followed. This created an atmosphere of uncertainty among the landlords as well as the peasants. Meanwhile, Mr.G.N.Barlow, the experienced Collector of Puri, left in October 1866. Mr.Mauspratt took over as the Collector of Balasore in 1865 and Mr.Cornell was appointed Collector of Cuttack in February 1866. Mr. T.E.Ravenshaw succeeded Mr.Shore as commissioner in July 1865.[9] This reshuffling in the Civil Department added to the dimension of the calamity since these men were yet, to get acquainted with the problems of the region and they could not react quickly in the early stages of the famine. The separation of police from the general administration also made it difficult for them to acquire first-hand information about the situation. The English settlers in Orissa were only a handful of people who were either missionaries or the employees of the East India Irrigation Project, whose main duty it was to carry on correspondence with England. Consequently, the local problems hardly touched them. There was also no local newspaper either in Oriya or in English, which could have given a word of caution to the administration, and no organisation of the people to transmit their grievance to the

government. Thus, the information media was virtually absent. Mr.Ravenshaw failed to grapple with the crisis and to invoke the timely attention of the Board of Revenue at Calcutta. He even missed the opportunity of apprising the Lt. Governor of the situation during the latter's visit to Orissa in February 1866.[10] At last, when he was made to realise the situation and was aroused from his complacent mood regarding the stock of rice he was greatly alarmed, for the situation had already slipped out of control. Attempts were made to import rice from Burma, but because of the rains and flood this rice had to wait only in the stores at Calcutta. Consequently, the situation became irretrievable. A Famine Commission was set up in 1867 which reported that the famine had affected about 12,000 sq. miles with a population of 40 millions, taking a total of 10 million lives.[11]

It would be pertinent to examine the role of this natural calamity in arousing a nationalist sentiment and its importance in bringing in its wake a number of far-reaching administrative and socio-political changes.

To begin with, the Government was forced to go into the deficiencies of the administrative set-up and this in itself proved a great blessing for the people who were so long taken for granted and were forced to establish contacts with the rulers only through the Bengali intermediaries. It was only to be expected that these overlords would get a larger share of the blame and as such would lose some of their dominance which was a matter of some solace to the local people.

When the Famine Commission in its report indicted the administration for their inept handling of the situation in Orissa, it created a flutter in the British Parliament.[12] The Secretary of State for India Stafford Northcote, took pains to review the whole situation and voiced his strong opinion in favour of a restructuring of the administrative set-up in the Bengal province. In his letter to the Governor-General in India in Council dated 25 July 1867

he gave expression to some of his ideas.[13] In September the same year, he despatched another memorandum wherein he pointed out that if the present arrangement was to be maintained then at least the spread of the presidency be reduced by the formation of Assam and the neighbouring districts (Orissa, etc.) into a Commissionership.[14]

John Lawrence, the then Governor-General of India consequently wrote to the Lt.-Governor of Bengal saying that, in principle he was not opposed to the creation of a Commissionership for Orissa; however, the financial grounds should obtain the highest priority. He felt that the expenses involved in such a changeover would be considerable and as such should weigh against it.[15] The Lt.-Governor on his part, virtually toed the line of the Governor-General and expressed his inability to agree to the proposal of Northcote. In response to such reactions, Northcote wrote in his letter of 16 January 1868 to the Governor-General that the question of the formation of separate Commissionerships including that of Orissa in the Province of Bengal was a matter whose approval rested only with the Governor-General.[16] Finally, the coup de grace was dealt by Governor-General when he decided to constitute Assam and some other districts into a separate commissionership but maintained the status quo for Orissa.

There is no doubt that Northcote's suggestion for making Orissa and other divisions as independent units in 1867 came only as an administrative expert's advice who realised that Bengal was in a condition of territorial indigestion and could not be administered efficiently. But the significance of his report was immense for the cause of the Oriya nationalism. It opened a new period in the history of this neglected area, as the government started taking some interest in the development of the region. It also instilled in the people a new hope that perhaps the government would pay heed to their grievances if these were only represented.

local vernacular language was not so acute as it was made out to be and that it was the government who were responsible for the poor show with regard to the text-books. Indeed, had not the missionaries come to Orissa and set up the press, there would not have been even a single vernacular text-book. The comments of 'Utkala Dipika' helped generate a concern among the Oriyas and a number of letters and complaints to the paper followed.[23]

Mr. Ravenshaw supported the cause of the Oriya language whole-heartedly and urged in his speech during a prize distribution ceremony at Cuttack High School, that the Bengali outsiders should learn the local language and if anybody was interested in a foreign language he could come to the English school to learn. He further commented that, earlier, a complete introduction of Oriya language had been difficult because Oriya text-books were not in plenty, but now that the problem seemed to have been circumvented and it was no more necessary to continue with a second language apart from Oriya.[24] The opinion of the commissioner was a great stumbling block in getting rid of the Oriya language. However, a concerted attempt by many, including the historian Rajendra Lal Mitra, Umanath Haldar the Deputy Inspector of Schools and Kantilal Bhattacharya, Deputy Inspector of Schools at Balasore to name a few, was being made to abolish Oriya from the schools in Orissa.

The Language Agitation in Orissa in the 19th Century

R. L. Mitra sparks off the Agitation

In the later part of the 19th century the Government of India started taking interest in the culture of India. They decided to bring out a catalogue and compile a short history of the main Hindu art and sculpture. Rajendra Lal Mitra, an eminent historiographer from Bengal, was interested in the scheme and requested the Government to appoint him to compile a book on the antiquities of Orissa.[25] The Government's permission to him to carryon the mission elated the Oriyas; to them it was an

indication of the Government's as well as a Bengali's appreciation of their great cultural heritage. 'Utkala Dipika' in its edition of 5 September 1868 appealed to the people to meet Mitra and extend to him all help required by him. However, all the expectations and enthusiasm of the people evaporated when Mitra, in one of his speeches in Cuttack mentioned that as long as Oriya language was not abolished, there would not be any progress of the land. He even went on elaborating and emphasising his point.[26] This had an immediate impact both on his own fellowmen and on Oriyas at large though the nature of the impact was different on the two groups. The Bengalis tried to substantiate their point whereas the Oriyas raised their voice in opposition. Mitra asserted that the population of Orissa being barely 20 lakhs it would be an absurdity to maintain a separate language for so few people. He further argued that if Bengali could successfully replace Oriya in the district of Midnapore then it should be equally potent in other districts as well.

The Oriyas were incensed by such arguments and refuted the veracity in Mitra's contention by pointing out that the figure of 20 lakhs accounted for only the Mughalbandi areas, whereas a big section of Oriya-speaking population lived in Midnapore in the north, Ganjam in the south and Sambalpur in the west.[27] Mitra's arguments were therefore thoroughly misleading and ill-motivated, they contended. As regards his citing the example of Midnapore, the statement spoke for itself, the Oriyas argued for, here was a blatant admission of the wrongs done and instead of seeking to make amends, further injustice was being perpetrated.

It is interesting to reflect on Rajendralal Mitra's speech at Cuttack which instigated the Oriya-Bengali dispute in Orissa. Mitra was a leading light in Indian historiography and his eagerness to study and report on the rich heritage of Orissa was to refute the British claims that India did not have any architectural and sculptural tradition of her own. This clearly proved his respect

for and belief in the Oriya tradition and culture. His remark about the abolition of the Oriya language was apparently based on the wrong information that was fed to him by the Bengalis in Orissa, as Mitra himself admitted later before an eminent Oriya leader, M.S.Das.[28] In the course of the agitation attempts were not only made to prove that the Oriya language did not have a separate identity but books and articles were printed which distorted the history of the land. In 'Utkal Hitaisini'(the periodical of the domiciled Bengalis) it was said that this land owed its development in religion, language and administration to Bengal and in utter disregard of established history attempted to prove that the Gangas came to Orissa from Bengal. It went on to contend that earlier to Chaitanya, there was no Oriya work, and even tried to sell the idea that Sarala Das the great author of the Oriya 'Mahabharata' came much later than Chaitanya and wrote under his influence.[29]

In defence of the Oriya language, Gaurisankar Ray, himself a domiciled Bengali, was one of the first to raise weighty arguments. He dwelt on the plight of the Oriyas under three Governments-those of Bengal, Madras and C.P. where they were prevented from fulfilling their aspirations.[30] He also laid bare the Machiavellian plans by the vested interests to abolish the Oriya language. It had its impact on the educated people in the mainland who also came to learn of the sufferings of their brethren in the outlying areas in the there provinces where they were being forced to disown their mother-tongue and learn Bengali, Telugu or Hindi. It is significant that people like Gaurisankar Ray were guided not by their ancestral language but by the genuineness of the cause and became pioneering leaders of Oriya nationalism.

Nationalism possesses many elements, each of which could be justified if the people were willing. Language, religion, geography, and race---all these may contribute to the claim of nationalism, though each one might prove disastrous if stretched

too far without the popular desire. A German disciple of Rousseau, Herder (1744-1803) had thought that each man could be himself only by thinking and creating in his own mother-tongue and the rights of nationality were above all, the rights of language.[31] It was this trait of the linguistic nationalism that became most evident during the early phase of the struggle in Orissa.[32]

The Newspapers and the Press

The language agitation in Orissa opened up a new epoch in its history. With the linguistic nationalism beginning to blossom, the educated people started exploring other possibilities to bolster up their stand. The necessary outcome of the spirit of liberation has been the active press and the formation of intellectual societies. This has been the trend since the 19th century when nationalism started playing a very significant role in many countries. The spirited Belgian youth for instance expressed his views through 'Courrier des Pays-Bas' in Brussels and the 'Mathieu Landsberg' in Liege, to name a few in order to spread their nationalist sentimnents.[33] In Orissa, the periodicals which existed earlier to the famine included 'Jnanaruna'(1849), 'Arurnodaya'(1861) and 'Probadha Chandrika'(1856). They were the mouthpiece of the missionaries and did not deal with any socio-political aspect. Therefore, when Gaurisankar Ray founded 'Utkala Dipika' on 4 August 1866 to fill in the gap, it was not only looked upon as opening up a new era in Oriya journalism, it served as a significant mark of enlightenment of the Oriyas as well. In September 1868 Bhagabaticharan Das published 'Utkala Subhakari' as the organ or the Brahma faith. Phakirmohan Senapati also brought out a monthly magazine 'Bodhadayini' from Balasore in 1868. Soon after it merged with 'Sambada Bahika'which appeared as a fortnightly and subsequently, as a weekly. In 19th century, the 'Utkala Dipika' and 'Bodhadayini Sambada Bahika' were the two most significant papers which represented and influenced public opinion in Orissa. There were many other newspapers and

periodicals too-for instance, 'Cuttack Chronicle'(March 1871), 'Utkala Darpana'(January 1873), 'Utkala Putra' (April 1873), 'Utkala Samskaraka'(August 1874), 'Prajabandhu'(1882), 'Sebaka'(September 1883).[34] Most of them were being published from Cuttack and Balasore. Gradually however some other places, particularly the feudatory states and the outlying districts did not remain unresponsive. The 'Mayurbhanj Fortnightly' appeared in April 1879 from Baripada, 'Purusottama Patrika' came out from Puri in April 1882 which however went out of publication after 1884. 'Sambalpur Hitaisini' was published from Sambalpur with the patronage of the Bamanda chief Sudhala Dev in May 1889, which assumed much importance during the late 19th century when Sambalpur fought for its nationalist rights. The 'Ganjam News' came out in August 1896 under the editorship of Syamsunder Rajguru and was patronised by the Parlakimedi chief, Padmanabha Narayana Dev. In 1899 June, 'the Ganjam Odia Hitabadini' started from Berhampur edited by R.Gunnia Sastri.

Some newspapers appeared too with a view to mobilising public opinion in favour of Bengali language. The most important of them was 'Utkala Hitaisini' or 'Orissa Patriot' which was founded in February 1869. Its editor was Kalipada Bandopadhaya and its manager was Indranarayan Pandit. During the language agitation this paper took the lead against 'Utkala Dipika's vociferous support of vernacular language. The same stand was also taken by another paper, called 'Utkal Star' (English weekly in February 1869). Some of the newspapers, which came out during the language conflict, disappeared after the agitation had subsided.

The publication of this spate of newspapers was made possible through numerous printing presses, which were established in Orissa after the great famine. Earlier to this period, there existed just one Press named 'Cuttack Mission Press' which had been functioning since 1837. But soon after, emerged 'Cuttack Company'(1865), 'Balasore Utkala Printing Company' (1868),

'Balasore De Press' (1873), 'Utkala Hitaisini Press'at Cuttack (1873), 'Puri Bhaktidayini Press' (1874), 'Ganjam Press' (1875), 'Mayurbhanj Press' (1879), 'Victoria Press' (1885), 'Jagannath Ballabha Press' (1886), 'Puri Printing Company' (1890), 'Arunodaya Press' (1893), 'Raya Press'Cuttack (1894), 'Darpanaraja Press' (managed by Rajakumar Hariharanath Pandit Bahadur, 1899) and 'Vinod Press' (managed by Brajanath Dev of Balasore, 1899). The newspapers aroused the political awareness of the people and drew their attention to various problems of local and national interest. In addition, the progressive education in the western style also started widening the horizon of the common people. All these created a congenial climate for like-minded people to come together for exchanging ideas on a number of issues.

The Societies and Clubs

In Orissa, the concept of forming associations or organisations was still in its infancy and there was not much public interest in such societies. With the expansion of press activities, however, the situation changed radically.

In November 1866, an association known as 'The Utkal Bhasa Unnati Bidhayini Sabha' was founded at Balasore; it appears to be one of the earliest to come into being. Subsequently, 'Utkala Dipika' in their edition of 25 April 1868 informed that some learned and aristocratic people of Cuttack also had formed an association since two months and that it was sitting regularly at the Cuttack High School where discussions were held on various social and scientific topics. Facilities were also provided to its members for reading newspapers. In fact, the Commissioner Mr. Ravenshaw also attended a meeting of the association on 15 April 1868 and encouraged its member .[35] One Abinas Chatterjee was the founder of this 'Cuttack Society'. This society attempted to widen its base and to this end, contacted various important personalities of the state including the landlords.

However, the response was hardly heartening.[36] 'Utkala Dipika' also attempted to inform the people about the utility of such associations. Gradually the atmosphere turned more congenial and many other associations appeared. In 1869 the 'Cuttack Debating Club'was organised.[37] Following this, the 'Cuttack Young Men's Association' was founded the same year at the residence of Lakshminarayan Roychoudhury at Cuttack where the members, numbering 12, were all school students.[38] The 'Utkal Bhasauddipini Sabha' was founded at Cuttack in 1874 with members drawn from the student and teacher community.[39] The Brahmins of Cuttack District sponsored the 'Utkala Ullasini Sabha' and in 1880, Lalit Chakraborty founded the 'Siksha Bidhaika Sabha.' Then, an association called, 'Suhrud Samaj' was founded at Cuttack for initiating discussion on matters relating to the welfare of the province.[40] There was even a 'Temperance and Suppression of Bribery Association' of which Dinabandhu Banerjee was the president and Padmanabha Satpathy was the secretary in 1884. In 1888 the 'Orissa Islamic Association' was functioning at Cuttack. Thus, in a short time, the scene was virtually flooded with a spate of associations and societies. The nationalism drew a lot of strength from these associations and newspapers.

Of all organisations that emerged in the 19th century, the 'Orissa Association' was perhaps the most significant considering its role of the awakening of the Oriya nationalism. In fact, it was the only organisation functioning with representatives drawn virtually from the whole of the cross-section of the Oriya people and could therefore be regarded as the national organisation preceding the 'Utkal Union Conference'. The 'Utkala Dipika' of 26 January 1878 carried the report of the first biannual session of 'Orissa Association' being held in January 1878 at the Cuttack Printing Company building[41] and from this information, one gathers that it was perhaps formed around July 1877. It further

became known through this news-item that the 'Orissa Association' had been formed with the initiative of the 'Utkala Bhasauddipini Society' and in collaboration with some other organisation. Only a couple of teachers and a few students were on its membership roll, and the first session was presided over by the noted Oriya literature, Radhanath Ray. The Orissa Association started functioning with no ambitious plan or programme. It was meant to be a forum only for encouraging literary discussions in an informal manner. The sessions sat regularly and by the following year, even monthly meetings were being held. The 'Utkala Dipika' of 10 October 1879 reported that one such monthly session of the Orissa Association was held in October 1879 at the building of the Cuttack Printing Company where, Ramsankar Ray read an article on 'Unity and Orissa' and Sudarsana Das was on the chair as president. The Orissa Association gradually attracted the educated people of Cuttack into its fold and its activities went on with a good deal of zeal. The association, however, assumed greater importance in 1882 when M.S.Das, Gaurisankar Ray and Chaudhury Kasinath Das decided to incorporate more constructive ideas into its programme. The Bhingarpur Zamindar Chaudhury Kasinath Das became its president, Gaurisankar Ray, the editor of 'Utkala Dipika', its secretary and M.S.Das, a Calcutta-returned lawyer, its vice-president. Since then, Orissa Association continued to work for the development of Orissa in various spheres. It took interest in the social development of the country. It even came out openly against the government for meddling in the affairs of the Puri Temple in 1886.[42] It sent a memorial to the Government on 20 June 1895 urging it to reconsider the decision on the language of Sambalpur; apprising the government of the serious disadvantages to the Oriyas in case of imposition of Hindi on them in schools and offices.[43] It also sent in its representatives M.S. Das and Gaurisankar Ray, to attend the first session of the All India Congress in 1885. In fact it went on sending

representatives regularly to the sessions of the Congress. Even after the emergence of the Utkal Union Conference, the Oriya Nationalist Organisation, when M.S. Das withdrew from the National Congress, the 'Orissa Association' continued to be represented at the Congress sessions for some more time, though it never put aside the 'Oriya problem', which was its prior interest.

To sum up, one finds that the 'Oriya-question' came up in the face of bitter opposition from the supercilious intermediaries. The long spell of subjugation, political dismemberment, widespread illiteracy, lack of genuine interest on the part of the government to develop them, absence of a true leader to show them the right path and above all, the presence of hostile elements in the mainland and in the outlying tracts engaged incessantly in political chicanery to dispossess them of their language and culture could not kill the sense of belonging among them scattered over wide areas. Truly enough one did not witness any systematic approach among the handful of Oriya leaders to coordinate their activities. However, one has also to realise that, in these years the Oriyas were always on the defensive what with virulent attacks from nature in the shape of a famine and from their own countrymen in the form of the vital language issue.

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32. A parallel of such linguistic nationalism was to be witnessed in East Paksitan (later Bangladesh), where even though 54.6% people spoke Bengali and only 1.2% Urdu, the Federal Government of Pakistan decided to thrust Urdu as the national language soon after the partition. On March 19, 1948 when Jinnah visited Dacca, he too advocated the use of Urdu as their national

language. The students rose in revolt. But ignoring the popular sentiment of the East Pakistan the Federal Government proceeded resolutely with its language policy. The plan was not only to make Urdu the national language of Pakistan but to introduce Arabic script for the Bengali language as well. The students and teachers of Dacca University came forward to oppose the move that was directed to strike at the very root of their culture-so at least the people of East Pakistan understood. In February 1952, a mammoth general strike forced the Government to stall their plan and to accept Bengali as one of the national languages, (Bhattacharjee, G.P., *Renaissance and Freedom Movement in Bangladesh*, pp. 57-82).

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CHAPTER III

AMALGAMATION OF SAMBALPUR: THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL STEP IN THE ORIYA NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The nationalist sentiment which found expression in Sambalpur in the late 19th century marked the first successful step in the unification movement of the Oriyas.

Historical Background

Sambalpur and its tributaries, called 'Eighteen Forts' had been under the Hindu Rule all along and had accepted the *sanads* from the kings of Orissa. During the time when the entire Orissa went over into the hands of the Muslims and Mughals and later on to the Marathas; the small kingdom at Sambalpur managed to secure its independence.[1] But in 1800, the Marathas occupied Sambalpur.[2] In 1803, when the mainland of Orissa came under British control, these areas were also annexed as part of Orissa. The British divided the territories into two districts of Patna and Sambalpur.[3] Patna included Khadiala, Bastar, Bodasambar, Phuljhar, Bindranuagada, and Sambalpur included Sakti, Raigada, Baragada Sarangagada, Gangpur, Bonai, Bamanda (Bamra), Redhakhol and Sonepur. The other two estates like Baud and Athmallik were converted into a separate estate and were brought under the Cuttack division. In 1806, Raigada was placed with Bihar but was subsequently attached to Nagpur.[4] On 24 August 1806, the rest of the territories of Sambalpur and Patna were returned to Marathas as a conciliatory move by the British.[5]

In 1818, however, when the Maratha power was finally crushed, the British took over the above territories once again. Bastar was immediately separated and made a part of the Raipur division.[6] The government gave independent *sanads* to all these estates, but they were administered from Sambalpur.[7] The superintendent of the tributary mahal of Cuttack placed his own

agent at Sambalpur.[8] The traditional Hindu King of Sambalpur was only a titular head, a puppet in the hands of the British. He died in 1827 leaving behind no male heir. The British Government kept the news of his death a secret and continued to rule the state.[9] Later on, they placed one Narayan Singh on the throne who also died childless in 1849.[10] By that time, Lord Dalhousie's Doctrine of Lapse had been promulgated and under the conditions of this doctrine Sambalpur was ceded to the British India and was placed under the Bengal Presidency. In 1857, when the Sepoy Mutiny was raging through the country, Sambalpur too joined the revolt. Surendra Sai, who was the main force behind the revolt in Sambalpur, was an agnate of the same dynasty that ruled Sambalpur and was an aspirant for the throne when the king died in 1827.[11] He was imprisoned by the British and was put into Hazaribag jail but was later freed by the Sepoys when the Mutiny broke out in 1857. Thereafter, he came to Sambalpur and laid claim to the throne that had already been liquidated by the British. His claim proving unavailing he organised an uprising in which the smaller estates also joined him.[12] In these unfamiliar hilly regions, the British army could not move fast and the rebels continued many successful ambushes on them. It was only when further support went from Cuttack that the rebels were brought under control and in May 1862, Surendra Sai, the great patriot who had by then become a household name in Sambalpur, surrendered to the British.[13]

In the same year in 1862, Sambalpur and its tributary states were placed in the Central Provinces. This arrangement began a period of deprivation and tribulation for the people of Sambalpur. This affliction was the result of their being a small minority group in the province. On their part, the Central Provinces also gained precious little on inclusion of Sambalpur as a small strip of Oriya-speaking region in the Hindi speaking province created great difficulties in the matters of administration. The arrangement

thus indicated the lack of far-sight on the part of the British Government.

Oriya Nationalism and Sambalpur

Nationalist spirit as has already been pointed out had emerged in Orissa in the second half of the 19th century and this resulted in the rise of the pan-Orissa idea, which got a fillip through the press, the activities of various societies and the mushrooming of educational institutions. Although Sambalpur had been pushed away to Central Provinces, the Oriyas of the mainland never ceased their concern for their brethren beyond the political frontiers. In the sixties, when much stress was laid on the spread of education among the Oriyas, Orissa showed a keen interest in the programmes being followed in Sambalpur. 'Utkala Dipika' reported[14] that in the six years between 1862-1868, around 249 schools were founded in Sambalpur and the number of students enrolled was 13,276. The same report further mentioned that the feudatory chiefs in that region were taking interest in the education of these people. The Bamanda chief Sudhala Deb and the Kalahandi chief Adaita Pratap Deb donated Rs. 250 each to the Medical School at Cuttack which had opened on 15 February 1876, as fellowship for two needy students every year for a three year course.[15] This was looked upon as a great help from Sambalpur. People of Orissa were happy too to see one candidate from Sambalpur among the 40 selected for admission into the Cuttack Medical School in its first year.[16]

'Utkala Dipika' expressed the elation[17] of Oriyas when it was rumoured that the government was discussing the possibility of breaking down the entire Central Provinces by giving away Sindh to the Punjab, the Maratha areas to Bombay, and placing Sambalpur with Bengal. Various newspapers in India started publishing such reports and attributing them to Lord Northbroke.[18] The Oriyas immediately appealed to the Governor-General through their newspaper that such a move of bringing Sambalpur

back to Bengal would be highly appreciated. It was further suggested that, since the natural Orissa (under Bengal) had close affinity with Sambalpur and both had commercial links too, it would be appropriate to attach Sambalpur to the Orissa Division under Bengal. The same paper lamented that, some people in Sambalpur seemed to be interested in convincing the government that Sambalpur's interests would be better served by putting it with the Chotanagpur district of Bengal. However, a division of the C.P. did not materialise at this stage.

A weekly journal called 'Sambalpur Hitaisini' which came out in 30 May 1889 and continued uninterrupted till 1923, revealed Sambalpur's contribution in fostering the nationalist agitation in Orissa. The Bamanda chief, Sudhala Deb had purchased the Jagannathballabha Press in 1886 and had left it at Cuttack in charge of Chaturbhuj Patnaik. But it became difficult to manage a press from Bamanda and its publications were not to the liking of the chief. Consequently, he got it transferred to Bamanda's capital, Deogarh. 'Sambalpur Hitaisini' was published from there under the editorship of Pt. Nilamani Bidyaratna. The journal dwelt among other things on various problems of the Oriyas.

It reported in its issue of 6 June 1894 that the commissioner had recommended to the chief commissioner of the Central Provinces that the, official work in the Police Department in Sambalpur and its tributaries be transacted in Hindi in lieu of Oriya. The chief commissioner was stated to have approved the proposal and to have sent instructions to the deputy commissioner in Sambalpur to explore the possibility of this changeover. The news came to the common people as a bolt from the blue. And the proposed experimentation appeared absolutely unacceptable to them in the face of their past experience. ". . . Urdu was introduced as the official language when the district first came under the British occupation. When Urdu appeared as impracticable for official purpose owing to the ignorance of the

language, Hindi was introduced. But the common people found it extremely difficult to acquire proficiency even in Hindi and after all this exercise, Oriya was introduced.[19] The 'Sambalpur Hitaisini' felt that the introduction of Hindi in the Police Department was just the beginning of a move to strike at the very root of their language in the district and in due course to abolish Oriya completely. The people were greatly alarmed at this prospect and prepared themselves slowly to face the challenge in a resolute manner.

This news bulletin was instrumental in generating nationalist movement in Sambalpur, that was to sweep the district with great vigour towards the end of the 19th century. Dissatisfaction had long been brewing in the society and the people now started asking seriously the question -- if it was difficult to administer an Oriya district in a Hindi-speaking province, what stood on the way of transferring it to Orissa? Would that be more harmful than sacrificing their mother-tongue? The 'Sambalpur Hitaisini' became the mouthpiece of popular sentiment.

Some of the educated local people organised meetings to discuss the issue. At one such meeting, the leading lawyer of Sambalpur, Dharanidhar Misra pointed out that Sambalpur was an Oriya district and Oriya was their mother tongue ". . . We do not know how the idea of replacing Oriya by Hindi arose in the first place. We also heard that police officers have been asked to learn Hindi and are being threatened that unless they qualify in the examination, their promotion would be put off," Misra said.[20] He also highlighted the difficulty that was arising out of a reshuffling in the Police Department. The example of one Rayabahadur Ratan Singh who came as the district superintendent of police to Sambalpur was cited where he was described as having faced embarrassment on account of his ignorance of Oriya. It was, therefore, his conjecture that such officers were possibly insisting on replacing Oriya by Hindi for their

convenience.[21] A memorandum was prepared in this meeting and was despatched to the commissioner and also to the deputy commissioner, where it was contended that since the administrative inconvenience of the Hindi-speaking officers was being put forward as a plea for the switching over to Hindi, it would be desirable if Sambalpur was transferred to the Orissa Division in Bengal.[22] The 'Sambalpur Hitaisini' proposed to send to the higher authorities another memorandum with popular support for which it was planned to collect signatories from all villages. The chiefs of the estates of Patna, Kalahandi, Sonepur, Redhakhol and Bamanda were exhorted to voice their protests to the government.[23]

The English administration never came in direct contact with the native people. They depended only upon the subordinates' reports and consequently were incapable of an unbiased analysis with misrepresented facts. To a Hindi-speaking officer who was posted in an Oriya-speaking area, it would be natural to recommend a changeover. From his standpoint, therefore, this would only appear as a scientific approach for administrative expediency. But beyond the inanimate files and the iron hands of discipline, there was the question of natural justice. The people of Sambalpur only pleaded for that. In their campaign against the enforcement of Hindi the people started reacting so strongly against Hindi-speaking people that in 1893 when a Bengali teacher was appointed in the Oriya High School in place of a Hindi-speaking teacher, they were elated.[24] They desired further association with the Oriyas from the mainland and also preferred Bengalis. They were happy too to see the publication of the developments in their district in the Bengal gazetteers.[25]

When the deputy commissioner received the appeal from the people of Sambalpur, he consulted with his superintendent and realised that the imposition of Hindi would create a good deal of problem. One important factor, he observed, was that the Hindi-

speaking people would not accept the job with such low remuneration as the Oriyas would do. He adduced many other arguments in favour of his opinion and forwarded the letter to the chief commissioner. The Oriyas were grateful to the deputy commissioner for such a move and expressed their appreciations through their newspaper.[26]

But, apparently such a recommendation of the deputy commissioner was not paid any attentions to by the higher authorities; for, by October of the same year the idea of replacing Oriya by Hindi had strongly precipitated in officials circles. Regular examinations in Hindi were introduced in offices. In one such test for the Oriya Amlas, only five qualified and two Amlas were fined rupees two each for abstaining from the examination.[27] A Hindi teacher was appointed to teach Hindi to the Amlas of Sambalpur and by the following year another teacher had come to teach Hindi to the Amlas and students of Baragarh.[28] The Central Provinces gazetteer dated 19th January 1895 notified that, from 1st January 1896 onwards, Oriya would be completely replaced by Hindi in the courts in Sambalpur.[29] The chief commissioner John Woodburn who issued this order, had visited Sambalpur in January 1894.[30] During his stay he was given a rousing ovation by the people. He and his wife visited hospitals and schools. He was reportedly highly pleased with their functioning and was recorded in fact to have commented that in the whole of Central Provinces he had not seen a district school like that.[31] The concern which he had shown for the people of Sambalpur had given them the impression that he was their well-wisher. The present unkind circular therefore strengthened their apprehension that he must have been prevailed upon by some interested quarters.[32]

The circular created a great stir in Sambalpur and the Oriyas all over Orissa immediately reacted to it. So far the agitation had been confined either to a leader like Gaurisankar Ray who

appeared to wield influence at the time of need, or to any organisation which was discharging its duty by sending a memorial to the higher authorities. In the beginning, when Hindi was gradually encroaching, the people did not begin any mass movement although they were highly dissatisfied. In fact, the local newspaper 'Sambalpur Hitaisini' was trying to arouse popular sentiment by pointing out that unless they made their protest audible it would be construed as indifference by the authorities.[33] At first the tradition bound people of Sambalpur thought it seditious and undesirable to decry the moves of the government openly. But the concern shown by sympathetic people from outside, the thought provoking writings in 'Sambalpur Hitaisini' and other newspapers of Orissa emboldened the common people. In 'Sambalpur Hitaisini' appeared a series of emotional appeals by the celebrated poet, Gangadhar Meher of Sambalpur. These writings came under a caption, 'The Sobbing of Utkala Bharati.'[34]

'Utkala Dipika' commented in its editorial that the decision (of the chief commissioner) seemed to be in direct contravention of the benevolent policy of the British Government, nay the recognised principle of the civilised world to educate the masses. It went on, "If Oriya is to be suppressed because it is spoken only by a few millions of people it might also be urged that Dutch or Danish or Portuguese, be obliterated also . . ."[35]

The Orissa Association held a meeting at the Cuttack Printing Company house in which they condemned the chief commissioner's action and decided to represent the case before the government.[36]

Accordingly, on 20 June 1895 the Orissa Association submitted a memorial to the Viceroy complaining against the chief commissioner's order, pointing out that the order was "impolitic, impracticable and opposed to the recognized policy of the Government"[37] This step by the Orissa Association indeed enhanced the stature of the Sambalpur trouble. Instantly, it

assumed an all-Orissa dimension and was taken up as the first formal step in the pan-Oriya movement.

Cook's Report

Around this time came the Cook's report which supported the cause of the Oriya speaking people.[38] H.G.Cook was the Commissioner of the Orissa Division who had suggested some administrative changes for Orissa in a report to the Secretary of the Government of Bengal. He said, ". . . As a question of administrative reform for which there is much to be said, I have to advocate the extension of the divisional boundaries as to include the whole area populated by races speaking the Uriya language, or at any rate, some definite areas adjoining Orissa where the Uriya language prevails. Orissa is a very small division both in area and population, and there is no doubt that the Commissioner could find time to deal with a very material addition to his work . . .

"The areas that I refer to are the Sambalpur district of Chattisgarh Division of the Central Provinces with the tributary states of Patna, Sonepur, Redhakhol, Bamra, Kalahandi and the whole or part of the Ganjam district with the states of Kimedi and Gumusar.

"Among the reasons for this change are, as I have said, the uniting in a single Division and placing under the same laws and rules the whole local Uriya population, instead of having a portion of it forming an insignificant item of the Central Provinces, and another portion forming an insignificant item of the Madras Presidency . . .

"Railway Communication advantage could be secured as the head quarters of Sambalpur District is nearer to Cuttack than that of Nagpur. About Sambalpur, he further wrote, though included in the Chattisgarh division, forms no part of Chattisgarh proper either geographically or historically . . ."[39]

People were greatly encouraged by this report which appreciated the Oriya sentiment. Confident of support, they sent appeals to the Viceroy from various quarters. 'Sambalpur Hitaisini' of 4 December 1895 reported under the caption 'Oriya language and the Viceroy' that two appeals had been despatched to the Viceroy from Cuttack and Sambalpur and that the contents of the applications must have been discussed in the court of the Viceroy. "It was disappointing," they wrote, "that nothing about it was informed to the people either of Sambalpur or of Cuttack."[40] The same paper dated 8th April reported that attempts were being made, to appeal to England directly against the imposition of Hindi. A separate fund was created to carryon the agitation and people from different parts of Orissa donated generously.[41]

But all these appeared to be an absolutely futile exercise. The government turned a deaf ear to these pleadings and Hindi became the official language. And so it remained for the next seven years. 'Utkala Dipika' lamented over such an unfortunate situation but thought that although the most uncharitable step had been taken by the government, there was no harm if the people went on ventilating their protest with due respect because someday the justice would be granted.[42]

M.S. Das wrote a letter to the Secretary of State for India where he pointed out the fallacy of such a policy implemented by the government. A copy of this letter was sent to the British Parliamentary Member Sir Charles Dilke.[43] On 8 September 1897, Sir Dilke wrote to M.S. Das that he sympathised with his cause and that he would take it up with Lord George Hamilton.[44]

However, the government remained unresponsive. And the popular movement subsided in time although the undercurrent of dissatisfaction was very much in evidence. In 1899 Lord Elgin was succeeded by Curzon as the Viceroy of India who had already achieved eminence on the British political scene. Immediately

after his arrival, he was to tackle famine and plague which continued to ravage the provinces for a whole year. Only after that, he got down to an "overhauling of the whole machinery of administration."[45] This attempt for a structural change in the administration by a new Viceroy, coupled with a new chief commissioner in the Central Provinces in the person of Andrew Fraser, rekindled the hope in the hearts of the Oriya people. The issue was presented afresh before Andrew Fraser in July 1901 where it was said: ". . . if it was thought impossible to have Oriya as the language of one district in C.P. they would prefer to be transferred to Orissa."[46] The chief commissioner of the Central Provinces asked in the same year in a despatch to the Government of India for the separation of Sambalpur in the Central Provinces in consonance with the people's desire.[47] Subsequently, Sripati Mishra from Sambalpur went over to Simla to meet the Viceroy.[48] It is reported that in 1900, M.S. Das also visited the Viceroy there. He narrated the misfortune of the Oriyas in such an appealing manner that Curzon was greatly moved. He promised to do whatever could be done and also agreed to visit Orissa on M.S. Das' request. The same year on his way back from Madras and en route to Calcutta he visited Orissa, and was apparently charmed by her art and natural beauty.[49] On 2 September 1901, M.S. Das sent a telegram to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, who was resting in Simla, describing in brief the case of Sambalpur.[50] He wrote that he had heard about the new chief commissioner's visit to Simla to discuss the memorial presented to their office in 1895 by the people at Sambalpur. The memorial included the protest against the order of "abolishing Oriya as court and official language." He reminded that Oriya Association too had submitted a memorial of the same nature in June 1895. His telegram saying ". . . the people of Orissa fully support the memorial now submitted by Sambalpur people" underlined clearly the fact that the interest in Sambalpur was not confined to the

people of that district alone; it was a matter of concern to the people of Orissa as well. This was because Sambalpur had all along been considered by them as a part of Orissa. He hoped, "Curzon being the first Viceroy to visit Orissa, will vouchsafe personal attention to this grievance." The reply which he received from the Private Secretary to the Viceroy on 12 September 1901 indicated the Secretary's sympathy with the issue.[51] He wrote that he had shown everything to the Viceroy and due considerations would be given.

But the government could not comply with the demands of the people or the suggestion of the chief commissioner that Sambalpur be seceded from C.P. immediately. They only issued an order in July 1902 which was to restore Oriya as the court and office language in Sambalpur from 1 January 1903.

M.S. Das held a general meeting in this connection at Cuttack and extended thanks to the government for their kind step.[52]

By the beginning of the 20th Century, the attitude of the people all over Orissa had started changing. They had become increasingly conscious of their problems. The successful language agitation and the struggle in Sambalpur for reviving their mother tongue instilled a hope in them — a hope for the metamorphosis of their present loathsome condition. The situation was summed up as follows ". . . During the later half of 1902, a monster memorial to Curzon was drafted above the signatures of hundreds of Oriyas in Ganjam. The memorialists spoke of themselves as a limb separated from the body, and they prayed not for a patch work redistribution but that the Government of India would be graciously pleased to bring together the scattered divisions inhabited by Oriya speaking people, i.e. Ganjam in Madras, Sambalpur in the Central Provinces, and Orissa in Bengal, under the Government of Bengal or under any one Government and one University."[53]

Meanwhile, there was a deep rethinking on the part of the government about the territorial redistribution and they were

toying with the idea of amalgamating Sambalpur with Orissa and of putting them together under the Central Provinces.[54] At this juncture Berar was ceded by the Nizam of Hyderabad to the government and the government took a final decision to make the territorial readjustment in India on a more rational basis.

The Risley Circular

A letter was issued by H.H. Risley the Secretary to the Government of India, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal on 3 December 1903, No 3678, dealing at length with the redistribution.[55] He referred to the letter of Stafford Northcote in 1867 which had suggested the separation from Bengal proper, of Assam and possibly of Orissa to relieve the burden of the Bengal fort. In his analysis about Orissa, which according to him should be amalgamated and be placed with either Central Provinces or Bengal, he pointed out that the association with C.P. would be justified so far as the land settlement was concerned; for, both regions were temporarily settled areas. Besides, Sambalpur and its attached states, all spoke Oriya which constitute 1½ million Oriya-speaking population. So, the other Oriya speaking areas could be attached to it and all these could possibly be placed under the Central Provinces. There had been a long association of Orissa with the Marathas, he argued.

But for a century Orissa had been associated with Bengal and consequently was conversant with Bengal administrative system. The commercial and educational class was also in favour of the association with Bengal. Distance to Calcutta was also much less. Orissa, again, as had been thought, could not provide a maritime outlet to C.P. So it could stay with Bengal as well.

Other points touched upon by Risley were ". . . questions of race and language, in addition to or apart from the arbitrary distinctions of administrative or territorial partition." He further noted, "They (Oriyas) entertain, so far as is known, no particular desire for the disruption of the existing ties, as compared one

with the other, but they entertain the strongest desire for the disruption of all such ties if by their means they can purchase the much greater advantage of linguistic union."

The Government of India have further been informed on the best authority that even those among the people of Sambalpur who were most attached to the C.P. would prefer to sever connection with the province to giving their mother tongue.

"On the grounds above stated the Government of India are disposed to unite the whole of Uriya-speaking peoples, both hill and plain, under one administration and to make that administration Bengal. In other words, they would add to Orissa the Uriya speaking tracts of Sambalpur and its feudatory states, the Ganjam district, and the Ganjam and Vaizagapatam Agency Tracts. Such a scheme would solve the question of language once and for all. This change would relieve both C.P. and Madras of a troublesome excrescence upon their administrative system: and it would result in handing over the Uriya problem to one Government alone, on a scale and with a unity that would admit of its being treated with consistency and efficiency."

The letter by Risley, which expressed the scheme of Curzon included the Partition of Bengal to relieve the excessive administrative burden on the Governorship of Bengal. This was to be done through the carving out a Lt.-Governorship for Eastern Bengal and Assam, and to compensate Bengal for the loss, the Oriya-areas would be united and were to be placed under Bengal.

Bengal resented the proposal of partitioning Bengal included in Risley circular very strongly for the move hurt their nationalistic feeling. After the partition, terrorist activities against the government were undertaken in a large scale in Bengal. In addition, Bengal also received the sympathy of the Indian nationalists which turned it into a national issue followed by the cries of 'Swadeshi' or boycotting everything English. Many Bengali students from Calcutta came down to Orissa seeking support for the Swadeshi movement.[56]

In Orissa, the spontaneous reaction to Risley Report was, however, one of gratitude and overwhelming emotion. The Oriya newspapers in Ganjam, Sambalpur and the coastal Orissa expressed their indebtedness to the government for their announcement.[57] There were many public and private meetings too, organised by the Oriyas to extend the gratitude to the government for showing such favour to them.[58]

The Government Order somehow needed a great deal of paraphernalia to be translated into practice. By 1904, Andrew Fraser had been promoted as the Lt. Governor of Bengal.

Meanwhile, Curzon went on a long leave to England. Lord Ampthill the then Lt. Governor of Madras, officiated as Viceroy at Calcutta during Curzon's absence. When the final decision was to be taken regarding the amalgamation of the Oriya areas, Andrew Fraser in his letter to the Govt. of India No. 2719 J-D, dated 12 September 1904, opposed the transfer of the Madras Oriya areas. Lord Ampthill passed a Resolution by the Govt. of India, No. 2491, dated 19 July 1905, which abandoned the transfer of Ganjam and Vaizagapatam Agency to Orissa though the proposed transfer of Sambalpur was endorsed.

Thus, Bengal was partitioned and Sambalpur (less the Phuljhar and Chandrapur-Padampur tracts) and the princely states like Sonepur, Bamanda, Patna, Kalahandi and Redhakhol joined with Orissa.

By 1905, the demands of the Oriyas had gained sufficient momentum. The agitation in Sambalpur in fact underscored the depth in the mass consciousness. However, the sense of triumph in Sambalpur was a good deal tempered by the status quo decision over Ganjam. Nevertheless, the significance of Sambalpur agitation could not be minimised. With the success of it, a first step towards unity was achieved in the Oriya national movement. The union on the western side of Orissa, excepting a few estates, was complete. The people realised that, however unfortunate their

situation might be, they were not destined to suffer forever. Nationalism which had been born, was now in full blossom.

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CHAPTER IV

EMERGENCE OF MADHUSUDAN DAS ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCENE IN ORISSA

The nationalist movement of the Oriyas spanned two broad phases. The early phase began with the famine, passed through the struggle for the preservation of the language and finally culminated in the amalgamation of Sambalpur with Orissa. The later phase could be identified with the formation of the Utkal Union Conference in 1903. In contrast with the preceding period, one finds here the emergence of some of the outstanding leaders of the soil and a more coherent approach to the problems of the Oriyas. Of these leaders, the most eminent was certainly Madhusudan Das – the brain and force behind the Utkal Union Conference.

However, when Madhusudan Das, alias Gobindaballabha Das[1] arrived at Cuttack in the year 1881 to begin his legal profession few took any notice of him. He had married a Bengali lady, had converted to Christianity and for long years was away in Calcutta.[2] Thus he had virtually no contacts with his men back in Orissa. He was in fact the first graduate among the Oriyas in the mainland Orissa and yet his brethren would not take pride in him because in many circles he was not even considered a true Oriya.[3]

Ironically, this man was destined to occupy a very important place in the social, political and economic scene of Orissa for fifty long years and the Oriya nationalist movement was to lean heavily on his personality for its shaping, grooming and fruition.

Early Phase

Life and Education

M.S. Das was born on 28 April 1848 at Satyabhamapur in the district of Cuttack in a respectable family. As was customary then, he had his preliminary education with the village teacher, where he completed his lower primary education. His father then

admitted him to a Muktab (Persian School) for Upper Primary course where he learnt the Persian language. Thereafter, he was brought to the High School, at Cuttack (the present day Ravenshaw Collegiate School) where he did his school final. In the school, he displayed courage and fearlessness on more than one occasion. He reminisced in his incomplete autobiography later on.[4]

"The selections from English literature which was prescribed for the Entrance Examination were taught by the Headmaster who was a recent indent from Bengal. He interpreted a sentence in a certain way. I considered his interpretation incorrect and I had the courage to say so. This was considered an instance of independence and insubordination which would not be tolerated in an Oriya boy. My name was removed from the register and I was expelled . . .

"This was a critical moment of my life. I realized the importance of my expulsion from school. It meant a full stop to further progress in English education. The importance of Bengalees was due to their knowledge of the English language. Without the knowledge of this language, I thought, my future life would be a long journey through the arid desert . . . Early next morning I went to Mr. Healy's bungalow. He was the controlling authority of the school . . . He asked me what I wanted. I narrated to him what had happened and showed him the passage."

After that Mr. Healy met the Headmaster and young M.S. Das was taken back to the school.[5] On completing his school in 1864, he went over to Balasore as a third teacher in the District School. This was the time when the Oriya-Bengali language dispute was raising its head in Balasore but M.S. Das did not actively associate himself with the issue. He acquired the intimacy of Phakirmohan and Radhanath, two celebrated writers of Oriya literature during his stay at Balasore.[6] On summer days three of them would go out on walk and have long chats. The high ambition that was

lurking in young Madhusudan used to surprise both Phakirmohan and Radhanath.[7] After sometime he gave up teaching profession to join as a clerk in the Collector's Office, but finally left for Calcutta in 1866 to receive higher education. There he graduated from the College of London Missionary Society. In Calcutta, he came in close contact with some English officials and missionary priests and developed an interest in Christianity. He, along with his close friend Ambika Charan Hazra, had converted to Christianity in 1869.[8] Subsequently he married a Bengali Christian lady in 1873 who however died five years later without leaving any child.[9] M.S. Das later on adopted Ambika Hazra's daughter Sailabala when her mother died.[10] From 1873 to 1878 he worked as a part-time Oriya translator in Calcutta High Court, and was employed as the Headmaster of the Calcutta Christian Missionary Society High School. During this time, his reputation as an ideal teacher spread in various circles. He was appointed by Dr. Gangadhar Mukhopadhyay as the private tutor of his son Asutosh. Sir Asutosh is reported to have often said that the credit for his English knowledge and love for character building was due to M.S. Das.[11] In 1878, M.S. Das graduated in Law and started practising in the Alipore court of 24 Parganas. With the death of his wife in the same year, he was greatly depressed and wanted to leave Calcutta.

Madhusudan's Return to Orissa

In 1881, at the instance of Sir Richard Girth he came down to Cuttack to start legal practice.[12] He began practising at the Cuttack Bar. Soon it was found that he would not remain content with the law practice alone. He was an active man with varied interests and resumed contacts with his old acquaintances, of whom Gaurisankar Ray became his closest. Gaurisankar was the private tutor of M.S. Das during the latter's schooling at Cuttack.[13] As an eminent leader during the course of language agitation he could give an authentic picture of the problem of Oriyas to M.S.Das.

Soon M.S. Das got deeply involved in the socio-political life of Orissa.

The Temple Case

It has been mentioned in the second chapter, how M.S. Das took the initiative, along with a few others, in reshaping the Orissa Association. However, basically, he was a lawyer by profession, and it was an event in the Court that brought him into limelight.

Lord Jagannath, as has been pointed earlier, has always been regarded as the deity of all Oriyas, and the rajas of Puri/Khurda popularly known as the Thakur Rajas (God-kings) have traditionally been accepted as the representatives of the deity. The sanctity of Lord Jagannath was also accepted by the East India Company when the latter annexed Orissa.[14]

However, the government was apparently not satisfied with the administrative structure of the temple, where the king of Puri was the autonomous head. In 1878, when Raja Dibyasing Deb was convicted of murder and was sentenced to transportation for life,[15] the government found an opportunity to intervene in the temple management. However, the dowager mother of Dibyasing Deb immediately called in the Royal Court as well as the priests of the temple and announced the ascent to the throne, of her five-year old grandson Jagannath Jenamani. He was proclaimed as the Raja Mukundadeb of Puri.[16] The dowager queen began to manage the affairs of the temple on behalf of the minor Raja. The arrangement was naturally not to the liking of the government in Fort Williams. It was decided that the control and endowments of the temple was to be vested in a committee of management. Accordingly, the Puri Temple Act of 1880 was announced.[17] The legislation was objected to by the priests of the temple and the queen submitted her petition to the government.[18]

However, her representation to preserve the age old tradition of Orissa went unheeded. On the other hand, the local

government instituted a suit in the Court seeking authority to appoint a Receiver for the Temple. The Court decided in favour of the government and the queen was denied the management of the temple.[19]

The Court's decision was not only a personal misfortune to the royal house, the Oriyas in general looked upon it as a humiliation to their ancient tradition.

The queen wanted to appeal to the Calcutta High Court but she lacked resources. She now made a personal request to M.S. Das to fight her case.[20] The latter accepted the responsibility though everybody thought it was a lost cause. M.S. Das took great pains to go into the records of the royal house and prepared the case meticulously. Simultaneously he tried to focus attention through articles in the press of the unjust and unfair interference of the government in the matter.[21]

After prolonged deliberations at Calcutta High Court, it was decided that the Lower Court's order to appoint a Government Receiver should be set aside. Raja Mukundadeb was reinstated in his authority over the temple. Consequently, the local government sought compromise with the dowager queen.[22]

The skilful and sympathetic handling of the Puri Temple case by M.S. Das contributed towards his dramatic success not only as a lawyer but as a leader too. It dispelled the misgivings of the Oriyas about his indifference to be identified with their community. Indeed, his interest in preserving the glory of the highest symbol of the Oriyas and Hindus earned him enormous confidence of the people.

Socio-Economic Activities

In the meantime, through the Orissa Association, M.S. Das was discussing the various problems in Orissa. In 1884, the commissioner of Orissa, Mr. Metcalfe was apprised of the agrarian problem in Orissa through a meeting by the Orissa Association and it was pointed out that since Orissa was perennially subject

to draughts and famines due to the lack of irrigation facilities, the expansion of canal system was essential.[23]

In 1885, he forwarded on behalf of the Oriyas, some suggestions to the government in a representation to Sir Rivers Thomson during the latter's visit to Cuttack.[24] The memorandum emphasised the need for (i) the expansion of the railways, (ii) the development of the industrial training, (iii) medical and nursing training facilities, (iv) the appointment of the Oriyas to high posts, (v) planning for the development of agriculture and (vi) the amalgamation of Oriya areas.

In 1887, the government nominated him as the vice-chairman of the District Board, Cuttack.[25] In that capacity, he tried to set up more schools not only in the coastal Orissa, but in the feudatory states too. He also saw to it that the salaries of the teachers were enhanced. His ideas regarding social reforms were progressive. He suggested for providing physical training to the boys serving in jail, so that they would be appointed as P.T. instructor in schools after completing their jail terms. He also strongly advocated female education.[26]

M.S. Das started studying various other national and local issues in depth. He took active interest in the Indian National Congress when it was founded in 1885, which will be dealt with in the sixth chapter. On behalf of the Orissa Association a representation to the government supporting the cause of the Sambalpur Oriyas was drafted by him.[27] He was thus slowly establishing himself as the leader of the public. It was a time when Gaurisankar Ray was ageing and was devoting his time mostly to his paper, 'Utkala Dipika'. The society experienced a void in the leadership, and M.S.Das with his education, intelligence, aristocratic gait and above all his keen interest shown in the public affairs was the natural choice of the people. In 1896, he was chosen a member of the Bengal Legislative Council and he went to Calcutta.[28]

It should be mentioned here that it was only after the 1892 Indian Council Act was passed that provincial legislatures decided about expanding their membership. The Bengal government announced its decision to take one member each from Burdwan, Bhagatpur, Dacca and one alternating from Orissa and Chotanagpur divisions. Orissa was asked to send its representative in 1896. That M.S. Das was chosen to represent Orissa clearly proved that he had already made a significant place for himself in the society.

During his membership tenure, M.S. Das was very active in the Legislative proceedings. He also remained busy in his law practice.[29] In 1897, when the Assembly was prorogued for the summer, M.S. Das started for England to undergo an appendicitis operation.[30]

While in England, he contributed letters to 'Utkala Dipika' narrating his experiences in the foreign country. He mentioned in one of such letters his pleasant meeting with T.E. Ravenshaw; the former commissioner of Orissa.[31] He also met high officials in England whom he appraised of Orissa's problems especially of the need for the permanent settlement. He even wrote a 'booklet' on the issue and distributed it among them.[32] He presented the Oriya handicrafts to some of the English officers who were highly impressed by their beauty and craftsmanship.[33] The Oriyas felt that M.S. Das had raised their dignity in the eyes of the English and they showed to him their gratitude in many ways after his return.

In 1898, his term as a member of the Bengal Legislative Council ended and he settled down at Cuttack again. He immediately got back into the mainstream of social life of the place. Thus, he presided over a meeting of the Mohammedan community,[34] discussed at another meeting the breaking out of plague,[35] and advocated the opening of a cooperative society in a gathering of important persons of Cuttack.[36] All these activities indicated the sincerity of a man who would not sit idle in the

midst of social maladies. His sympathy with the public cause and his pragmatic approach to many of the problems endeared him to the Oriyas who had already started addressing him as the 'Grand Old Man' at the age of fifty.[37]

However, this ambitious man was not happy with these small associations or their meetings, which to him were not an end but only the means to bring about progress and development of the Oriyas. He started thinking deeply about the possibilities of the economic development in Orissa. In 1900, he advertised for the 'Orissa Art Wares' which he established with a view to expanding the cottage and the traditional small-scale industries of Orissa.[38] He realised that in order to keep pace with times and to prosper, it would be wise to take greater interest in industry. M.S. Das is more often remembered for his contribution to Orissa's industrialisation. His achievement in this field was even more spectacular since no conscious efforts had so far been made in this direction.

Through the 'Orissa Art Wares', he first started making on a large scale the filigree works, which are traditional handicrafts of Orissa. Various other cottage industries caught his attention too and he helped them develop on sounder footing. He exhorted the village weavers to come over to his workshop and receive better training in weaving.[39]

In 1905, he established the famous 'Utkal Tannery'---a shoe factory.[40] He was convinced of the importance of such a concern in view of the cheap export of huge quantities of raw leather to England and the subsequent selling of finished goods back in India at an exorbitant price.[41] Skins of crocodiles, serpents and lizards which were easily available in Orissa were collected for the shoe factory at his instance. M.S. Das laid the utmost importance on the quality of the shoes that were being produced at his factory. Products used to be very meticulously examined for defects and he was never prepared to compromise even with minor imperfection. Because of this, the factory used to incur

heavy losses at times but that could never force Madhusudan to deviate from his principle of putting reputation above everything else, particularly when it came to the prestige of the Oriyas. 'Utkal Tannery' used to be frequently visited by important personalities all of whom were full of praise for it. Gopabandhu Das described this venture as a 'great deed'.[42]

Unfortunately, however, in spite of the promise it showed, 'Utkal Tannery' became an increasingly losing concern and could not be sustained for long. It almost closed down in 1927.

It may be worthwhile to quote Swami Bichitrananda Das in connection with M.S. Das' contribution towards the industrialisation of Orissa: "He emphasized the usefulness of cottage industry, the formation of Joint Stock Companies, and Co-operative industries as early as 1903 . . . Really, he lived much ahead of his time. He was 50 years ahead of his countrymen (in Orissa) but people did not take up the spirit of industrial life and did not like to develop the particular national genius of theirs, but tried to seek jobs for making both ends meet. Even, so early in 1903 he introduced charkha (spinning wheel), which was plied formerly in every household in Orissa. He helped and encouraged cotton cultivation to save the people from hard competition with West and to save the struggling weavers and cultivators in their hard competition with Manchester goods."[43]

M.S. Das had already emerged by the beginning of the 20th century as the indispensable leader of the Oriyas. It is doubtful whether he had pre mediated plans of plunging into the movement of the Oriyas when he shifted his seat to Cuttack. His long absence from the main scene naturally kept him out of touch with the Oriya movement, and in spite of all the interest he might have had in it, he had not yet experienced the feel of it. His memory of humiliation at the hands of the Bengali colleagues[44] and teachers in school could hardly have prompted him to join the movement since as a man he was positively broad-minded and narrow parochialism never touched him. The temptation of shooting up

into quick fame through his association with Oriya movement as a factor for making his plans well in advance is also untenable since he was aware that the Oriyas were hardly looking to him as their future leader. He had been greatly influenced by the new spirit of learning that was changing the outlook of Bengal and of India in the 19th century. This perhaps urged him to put his might into raising the dignity of the fellow Oriyas in the eyes of others, as he had been trained up right from his childhood to take pride in Oriya tradition and culture. He saw for himself the situation where his people were being overrun by the neighbouring elements and the government was taking no notice of it. He sincerely felt that Orissa could not be allowed to continue in the present state of suffering any longer.

He was guided by a singularity of purpose and aim. He realised right from the beginning that before trying to put forward the demand for Oriya unification, it was necessary to work for the social uplift, economic progress and educational development of the Oriyas that would enhance their strength and prosperity. Only then could they endeavour to fight back the neighbouring elements acting as intermediary rulers and only then could the way for the amalgamation of the Oriya tracts be ultimately paved.

So far, the Oriyas had not thought on these lines. They had been quite active during the language controversy and had shown their solidarity to some extent. But a pragmatic approach to many of their social grievances which M.S. Das displayed on more than one occasion had never come their way earlier and hence they were very much impressed by him. They saw in him the man who would steer them clear of their troubles and would lead them to their cherished goal of glory and success. He was accepted by the Oriyas as their unchallenged leader for fighting their cause.

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37. Ibid., 2.7.1898.
38. Ibid., 17.11.1900.
39. Das, S.N., op. cit., p. 127.
40. Ibid., p. 230.
41. Ibid., p. 232.
42. *SJ*., 2.8.1924.
43. Das, N.K., op. cit., pp.3-4.
44. When M.S.Das first entered the Cuttack Bar, he was humiliated by his fellow Bengali lawyers. He was not even allowed to sit in the Library room occupied by them. The judge of the Court, an Englishman, however, took notice and kindly offered him a separate room.
(Mohanty, S., op. cit., p. 245).

CHAPTER V

GROWTH OF NATIONALISM IN ORISSA

Nationalist movements that became a common feature in the 19th and 20th centuries mostly adopted democratic methods. An agitating nation usually began with a nucleus consisting of a single or a group of leaders and subsequently gathered large active masses around it who became an instrument in carrying out the movement. 'Young Italy' of Mazzini was thus a great achievement since it instilled into the youth and through them into the masses a spirit of revolt against the suppression of their national right. Congress in India became a symbol of freedom struggle on the same lines.

In Orissa, the 'Utkal Union Conference' ('Utkala Sammilani') provided the people with a similar platform and was largely instrumental in arousing responses from various groups in the society that strengthened the nationalist movement.

The Utkal Union Conference ('Utkala Sammilani')

M.S. Das, the architect of the Oriya nationalist movement in the 20th century, had keenly observed the Sambalpur agitation and the recent developments in Orissa and was strengthened in his belief that only a well-organised joint endeavour with a greater thrust could carry the aspirations of the Oriya people to fulfilment.

This desire to have an Oriya organisation which would be a sort of National Assembly to the Oriyas was primarily motivated by a feeling of estrangement with Bengal that was deepening every day. In 1902 when Oriya was introduced as a separate language in the Calcutta University the Bengalis raised strong protests,[1] which disappointed the Oriyas. They became further disenchanted when Sir S.N. Banerjee, the great nationalist leader of Bengal, requested M.S. Das to include Orissa under the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee which had recently been formed by him.[2] M.S. Das could not agree to such a proposal for he had started aspiring for a separate organisation for Orissa.

In January 1903 M.S. Das convened an informal gathering at his residence of a large number of celebrities in Orissa including the feudatory chiefs who had earlier assembled at Cuttack for a grand court (Durbar).[3] It was an instant success in the sense that the participants freely exchanged views on various problems affecting natural Orissa and expressed the desire to meet often, at least once a year.

In the same year, "... A small band of enthusiasts gathered in the town of Rambha (in Ganjam) under the beneficent Raja of Khallikote and resolved to establish the 'Ganjam Jatiya Samiti' (Ganjam National Conference) whose first sitting was proposed to be held in the town of Berhampur in the ensuing Easter."[4] In April, it met with eminent persons from all over Orissa including M.S. Das. The people of Ganjam were greatly enthused when they saw in their midst the well-known intellectuals like Nanda Kisore Bal, Gopal Chandra Praharaj and Krusna Prasad Choudhury from Cuttack; Phakirmohan Senapati from Balasore; Ramachandra Das, Gopabandhu Das, Baksi Lokanath Bidyadhar Mahapatra, Pandit Basudev Kavyatirtha and Raghunath Rao from Puri.[5] The Conference discussed the imparting of education in Ganjam both in vernacular and in English medium and chalked out plans for opening libraries as well as for writing Oriya-text books. It also exhibited an urge for the development of modern and ancient Oriya literature. In addition, unanimous desire was expressed for the amalgamation of Oriya-speaking tracts under a common administration.[6] There was a general willingness to hold similar sittings every year.

In the same month M.S. Das presided over a meeting of the Orissa Association which was attended by the Kanika chief, G.H.Howell, some local English ladies, Gokulananda Choudhury, Brajasundar Das, Gopal Chandra Praharaj, Janakinath Bose and Ramasankar Ray among others.[7] In this meeting there was a general discussion on the re-union of the Oriya-speaking tracts. It was

decided to send an appeal to the Governor-General for uniting all the Oriya tracts and placing them under chief commissionership like Assam. This chief commissionership it was further agreed, should be connected with the Calcutta High Court and the Calcutta University.

M.S. Das noticed in these meetings and other similar conferences, a basic identity with his views but he was doubtful if these congregations, so narrow in their scope would be able to translate his blueprint of ideas into a concrete shape. He had actually envisaged a much wider forum embracing a large number of motivated people.

He, therefore, convened a meeting at the Kanika courtyard on 25 October 1903,[8] at which it was decided to meet during the ensuing Christmas vacation. 30 and 31 December were the dates chosen. An executive committee was constituted to carryon preparatory work for the meeting.

That was how Utkal Union Conference was born and was christened in December 1903.

The Aims and Objectives

Utkal Union Conference as the name implies was to bring into its fold all the Oriyas in Orissa as well as those that were tagged on to other provinces. It included the non-Oriya people who had settled in Orissa generations ago, and the recent settlers who had identified their interests with that of Orissa. In that sense, it was truly a conference of the 'Utkaliyas'. It did not maintain any list of its membership and was open to everyone who came under one of the above categories. The Oriyas everywhere wanted to come closer and know each other[9] and the Utkal Union Conference (U.U.C.) was to provide a platform for this rendezvous. That was how it was perceived by M.S. Das.

It was decided to make the functional structure of the U.U.C. federal in character.[10] An executive committee was contemplated for working out broad programmes and each district was to have

a committee of its own. Each village was to send delegates to the sub-divisional committee, which in turn, was to elect representatives for the district committees, and from each district committee, delegates were to attend the Conference. In this way, thought M.S. Das the ideas could percolate to the remotest village.

The Utkal Union Conference resolved to conduct its proceedings in the language of the people.[11] The gatherings were to cut across various class barriers and was expected to voice the will of the people. It was thus to function as the first National Assembly of the Oriyas. This Assembly was to set before itself various objectives and was to adopt policies to achieve them.

It is not difficult to visualise that the objectives of the U.U.C. were formulated with a nationalist fervour and it would be worthwhile to analyse the nature of this nationalism. It has been observed by William Rose that nationalism "is . . . called into being by injustice and the thwarting of healthy patriotism . . ."[12] In the case of Orissa, the "injustice and the thwarting of healthy patriotism . . ." was perpetrated by the go-between class and not by the British Government --- at least the people thought so. It was therefore natural that the nationalist feeling that inspired the U.U.C. was directed, at least to begin with against the intermediaries. However, the nationalism it propounded was not entirely negative in character.

Its aims as have been broadly delineated earlier were defined in clear terms -- to establish unity among the entire Oriya population distributed over different provinces, to work for the all-round development of the Oriyas, to amalgamate the Oriya-speaking tracts and to safeguard the interests of the Oriya people living outside Orissa.[13]

The Policy

Once it had decided on its aims and objectives, the U.U.C. formulated its policy, which was basically one of appeasement towards the British Government. M.S. Das believed that Orissa

would not profit much by criticising the policy of the government in whose hands lay the scope for the progress of the Oriyas. Political issues therefore were not within the purview of the U.U.C. at the time of its birth. The U.U.C. on the other hand would always begin its session by paying tributes to the British Crown and its representative in India — the Viceroy.

The policy of forming an alliance with the British Government strengthened its cordiality with the feudatory chiefs and zamindars who surely constituted, a major power in Orissa, next only to the British Government. M.S.Das had the shrewdness to notice and exploit these chiefs' abhorrence for the Congress. His closeness with these people led M.S. Das to adopt a firm conciliatory policy towards the government. In fact, the U.U.C., the brain-child of M.S. Das was nurtured in the lap of the Kanika chief.[14] The patronage of these chiefs was accepted, as U.U.C. ritually chose one of them its president in every session for a long time. It began its session with the Mayurbhanj chief as the president who had earned great reputation for his benevolence. He was married to the daughter of the celebrated Keshab Chandra Sen of Bengal and was known there as a Bengali king. M.S. Das is reported to have remarked that it was only he who 'reconverted' the Mayurbhanj ruler into Oriya by having him chosen as the president for the first session of the U.U.C.[15] These feudatory chiefs continued to be the presidents and chairmen of the reception-committees in successive sessions till 1913 when for the first time a 'commoner' became the president — M.S. Das himself.

The Activities

The first session of the Conference took place on 30 and 31 December 1903 at the Idga field at Cuttack following a month of meticulous preparation.[16] It was inaugurated amidst an air of mutual affection and understanding of the Oriyas from all over who had come with great expectations.

The session was attended by five Oriya chiefs and the delegates from the outlying tracts alone numbered 335.[17] There were many resolutions passed and decisions arrived at in this session. It was agreed that the Conference would meet annually. It was decided to adopt a 'pink turban' as a symbol of the Oriyas. Also, a few patriotic songs were chosen to be sung at the beginning of every U.U.C. session. The speakers stressed that Oriyas should have brotherly relationship with others. The Conference agreed to make proper arrangements so that deserving students could be sent abroad for receiving higher education and be provided with other facilities. A number of committees were formed to undertake social reform work, to protect and develop the handicrafts industry and to encourage literary and cultural activities. The executive committee was entrusted with the charge of maintaining the finance, the main source of which was personal donations.[18]

People were greatly impressed by the organising ability of M.S. Das.[19] It was also a novel experience for the common people of the feudatory areas to attend the session on an equal footing along with their rulers and it was reassuring to see all the aristocratic and leading Oriyas taking part in the organisation as also in the deliberations. Emotion must have risen to great heights when people reportedly collected handfuls of earth from the meeting ground and preserved it with them as something holy and auspicious.

Soon after, the activities began proliferating through branch associations numbering 381, which were organised by 15 competent paid missionaries of the Conference. These branches were spread all over the greater Orissa. Two of the branches were set up in Midnapore, 4 at Calcutta, 23 at Ganjam, 5 in Sambalpur, 44 in feudatory states, the rest distributed over Cuttack, Puri and Balasore.[20]

The U.U.C. continued to meet annually and its executives met more frequently to discuss the proceedings, its impact and its

development. M.S.Das took personal care to go from place to place to carry on the propaganda work.[21] He had taken tremendous amount of burden on himself and on many occasions emptied his pocket for the survival and success of the Conference.[22] He even pleaded with the illiterate villagers to strengthen the cottage industry, to start spinning, to use their own loom for weaving and to take to intensive agriculture.[23]

The next session was held again at Cuttack on 28 and 29 December 1904 under the presidentship of the Raja of Dharakote. In this session, interest towards the students was renewed and the Conference demanded a Girls School at Cuttack and pressed for a scholarship for B.Sc. classes to be instituted in the memory of Samanta Chandrasekhar. The 'Young Utkal' Association, which was formed, simultaneously with the U.U.C. for the students was declared a part of the Conference too.[24]

In the meantime, much propaganda work was going on in different parts of Orissa. In villages, the branch associations were working with tremendous enthusiasm.[25]

The necessity of issuing a bulletin periodically on behalf of the U.U.C. was felt and in the 3rd session on 13 and 14 April 1906, it was implemented under the editorship of Babu Nilamani Chand De, B.A. This journal of the U.U.C. was meant to spread the news of the proceedings of U.U.C. throughout Orissa. But unfortunately, it went into oblivion just after two issues.[26]

By the time the third session was held, Sambalpur had come to Orissa and Damodar Kar was selected to welcome the people of Sambalpur on behalf of the U.U.C.[27] Sambalpur's return greatly encouraged the people and they hoped that, Ganjam, Singhbhum and Midnapore would soon follow suit. Deliberations reiterated the need for the development of agriculture and cottage industry. It was thought practical to educate and train up the children of weavers and farmers. Importance was also attached to the setting up of an engineering school in Orissa.[28]

The fourth session which was also held the same year in December, was quite significant in that it was the first time that U.U.C. meeting was held in one of the outlying areas. The venue selected was the Berhampur city in Ganjam.[29] As was expected, it generated great excitement among the people of Ganjam and it contributed to the intensification of activities of the amalgamation movement in South Orissa. This session was presided over by the chief of Kanika.[30] It was decided here that the aims of the Conference should be more minutely categorised and a drive should be launched to procure finance to implement them. Stress was laid on female education and on educational development of Ganjam in general. In addition, gratitude was expressed to the Madras government for providing concessions in matter of Oriya education in Madras.

This session was also important because here for the first time some discussions took place to assess the functioning of the U.U.C. The farsighted politicians had already started to look beyond the initial excitement of the conference. It came to notice that many branch associations had disappeared and many others were somehow plodding on without much action. It was felt that, unless some fund was raised and set aside for the propaganda work and specific persons took charge of it, the U.U.C. would collapse very soon. The delegates who attended this session numbered 105 from Puri alone, 96 from Cuttack, 6 from Balasore and 1 from Sambalpur.[31]

In 1908 two sessions were held,[32] one in April at Puri and the other in December at Cuttack. In both these sessions, emphasis was once more laid on female education. It was also decided to keep aside some funds of the Conference for educational purposes.

The office bearers of Central and District Committees were mainly nominated in this session.

The seventh session[33] was held at Cuttack in December 1910 where special gratitude was shown to Mr. Ravenshaw who had

sent Rs.1000 for the education of the Oriya children. District committees were organised at Cuttack, Puri and Balasore.

The eighth session was held at Berhampur in April 1912.[34] This session was doubly important -- first, it was meeting in an outlying Oriya tract, after a lapse of six years; second, it was the first session after the Bihar-Orissa province was announced. The all Orissa meetings at Ganjam apparently intensified the union movement in that region and the feedback of the movement perhaps generated a natural sympathy of the Oriya leaders towards that place. It must be mentioned that while not a single session had been held either in Singhbhum or Midnapore, U.U.C. was meeting for the second time in Ganjam. As the Bihar and Orissa province was carved out of the Bengal Presidency without the amalgamation of Ganjam, it was felt by its people that yet another opportunity for their re-union with Orissa had been lost. It also created great disappointment in the rest of Orissa. In Ganjam meetings were held in different areas like Khallikote, Rambha, Biruli, Dharakote, Puttugram, Jeypore, Badakhimendi and in other places.[35] When, therefore, the U.U.C. met soon after in Berhampur, people were filled with excitement. It was emphasised in this session that the union of Ganjam and other tracts with Orissa be insisted upon under the same principle guiding the Bengal re-union. It thanked Lord Curzon and MacCallen Scott for having suggested the union of Oriya-speaking areas in British Parliament.[36] But by far the most significant step of the U.U.C. at this session was the adoption of political propaganda in its agenda.[37] Such a step was clearly a sequel to the creation of Bihar-Orissa province without the re-union of Oriya tracts. It was the general feeling that Orissa was being used for the political advantage of Bihar as it had been used for Bengal.

It must be recalled however, that the inclusion of political discussion was being pressed for by many people for quite some time. In a letter to the editor of 'Utkala Dipika' by one signed as

'Orissa', a suggestion was made, "to raise the status of the U.U.C., by converting it into a political body . . ." The letter continued, "I know there will be opposition to such a proposal because government officials and feudatory chiefs cannot take part in it. Let's therefore divide the function of the Conference into two branches, namely political and non-political."[38] 'Utkala Dipika' added in its comment that though it was ludicrous to make a division of the U.U.C. it was perhaps necessary to hold political discussions hence-forth.[39] However, many were sceptical by then about the achievements of U.U.C. and the noted paper, 'Star of Utkal' pointed out, "we do not attach much importance to this change in principle on the part of the Conference for we never attached any importance to its practicability of carrying out any of its resolutions, political, social or literary."[40]

The 9th session was held at Puri in December 1913 under the presidentship of M.S. Das.[41] This session dealt with the problem of amalgamation of Oriya tracts, and introduction of Oriya in schools, courts and offices in those tracts. It put forward the demand for an Engineering School in Orissa. Deep appreciation was expressed for the Satyavadi School, an open air institution which had been opened at Satyavadi in Puri in 1909.[42]

The next session was held at Parlakimedi, Ganjam in December 1914, hosted by the chief of Parlakimedi who spent ungrudgingly for its success.[43] The Jeypore estate's heir apparent, Vikram Dev Verma, was chosen the president in this session. He earnestly appealed to the gathering that intense campaigning should be started in the outlying Oriya-speaking areas and that agitation must begin in every city, every village, and indeed every house. He fully appreciated Grierson's division of actual Orissa on the basis of language.[44]

In the same session, a leading personality from southern Orissa, Harihar Panda delivered a moving speech in which he decried the timidity of the government in officially recognising

Oriya only in one division out of four in the district of Ganjam. He argued in favour of government attempts for establishing a large number of elementary and secondary schools in the Oriya-speaking tracts and pleaded for better transport facilities for connecting different outlying areas with the main Orissa.[45]

As in earlier sessions, its resolutions included the amalgamation issue of the Oriya areas, use of Oriya in courts and offices in the different outlaying tracts. A remarkable decision taken here was to sponsor one doctor Rammurti Patnaik with the monthly allowance of Rs. 300 to treat the wounded soldiers of the war.[46]

A large number of common people attended this session. The representatives who came from Banpur, Khallikote, Athagarh, Dharakote Badakimedi, Sankimedi, Delang, Nuagada and Nimapada comprised not only the chiefs but also people of humbler origin. M.S. Das attended the session in spite of sad demise of his brother the previous day.[47]

Until this time, the organisers of the U.U.C. from Cuttack had not regarded touring through the outlying places amongst the Oriya people as important. This tenth session of U.U.C. at Parlakimedi, however, appointed Ananta Mishra as the 'roving missionary' to carry on propaganda work throughout Orissa.[48] He moved by train, in bus, in carts and very frequently on foot for the campaign. He started sending his reports of the daily tour and meetings, which were published from time to time in the newspaper, 'Asa'.[49]

His meetings influenced the people to a large extent in actively participating in the Oriya agitation programme. It must, however, be added that, he was alone in this endeavour and even though his dedication for work was of the highest order, the lone endeavour was but a drop in the ocean. The U.U.C. ultimately paid the price for this lack of farsightedness.

The eleventh session which was held in Sambalpur in December 1915 emphasised mostly the earlier demands like facilities for Oriya education in outlying tracts, declaration of Oriya as a court

language in Singhbhum, Phuljhar, Chandrapur, Padampur and a separate University for all Oriya tracts.[50] It also put up a case for including an Oriya representative in the Imperial Council. A little embarrassment however cropped up from the use of the word 'Oriya', for, the domiciled Bengalis, who had been associated with the Conference, took offence.[51] After much argument, it was decided to use the word 'Orissa inhabitants'. M.S. Das could not attend the session as he had been invited to preside over the All India Christian Conference at Allahabad.[52]

The twelfth session was held in December 1916 at Balasore which was presided over by the raja of Manjusha.[53] This was the first session where the deliberations centred not only around the union of all the Oriya-speaking tracts, but also the question of putting them into a separate administrative unit as well.[54] It also demanded that the Jeypore Agency in Madras be made a separate district and Oriya be introduced here. The U.U.C. pleaded once again for an Oriya member in the Parliament. A demand was also raised for the teaching of Oriya in the Patna University and for the introduction of Oriya in the courts in Singhbhum and Ganjam. The agenda also included the claim for setting up of an Engineering School, the opening of M.A. and B.L. classes in Ravenshaw College, the starting of a Sanskrit College in Puri, the beginning of a project for a port in Orissa and the revival of the salt manufacture industry.[55]

The thirteenth session sat at Cuttack on March 1918 under the presidentship of the father of modern Oriya literature, Phakirmohan Senapati.[56] Discussions were related to the revival of salt industry, introduction of Oriya as the court language in the Oriya-speaking areas of Singhbhum and the Central Provinces. It urged again that two Oriyas be taken as members of the Imperial Council and one in the Provincial Executive Council. The Domiciled Bengali Association, consisting of those who were considered 'in every sense indigenous to the province', was incorporated in the U.U.C.

The session witnessed many significant developments in the U.U.C. which affected its future course. The presence of the great writer who had produced masterpieces lent a special charm to the atmosphere. In an eloquent speech he brought out the significance of the mother tongue and pointed out that "clothing some other nation's language as your own would kill the spontaneity of your tongue and brain."[57] In this session, there was a misunderstanding between M.S. Das and some student groups who refused to work as volunteers. M.S. Das thereupon invited the Satyavadi boys to come to the rescue of the U.U.C. and they readily obliged. The dedication and discipline of the Satyavadi boys impressed the public and the organisers alike. Gopabandhu Das the founder of the Satyavadi School also received a lot of appreciation for the excellent training imparted to his students.[58] Gopabandhu Das, who had already come into the political limelight in Orissa and outside delivered a speech supporting the cause of amalgamation. He refuted the allegation that the Oriya agitation was confined only to M.S. Das and his group. The fact was, he pointed out, that there had been meetings and organisations in every place, in every village and practically in all outlying areas. People from even the lowest strata of the society were accepted into the fold.[59]

All this, however, did not quieten some of the critics of the grand old leader, M.S. Das. As Secretary for this session, M.S. Das was selecting speakers for various occasions and seemed to have omitted some names from Ganjam, perhaps inadvertently. This act infuriated quite a few delegates and generated some ill feeling. M.S.Das appeared very much pained at such intolerance and subsequently wrote a letter to 'Asa' dated 15 April 1918. He said very apologetically, ". . . I have been grieved to learn that some errors and omission in the selection of speakers to move and support the several resolutions adopted by the U.U.C. on 31 March have given offence to some brethren of Ganjam whose

hearty co-operation we need to give effect to the resolutions . . . I am very sorry for what has occurred. I hope my brethren who have been offended will pardon me." This episode was only symptomatic of a decline in the unchallenged leadership of M.S.Das. Hereafter his activities were to be restricted to a good deal and he appeared to be losing ground in the U.U.C. to some younger members.

However, M.S. Das presided over one special session, which was convened to review the Montague-Chelmsford Report in September 1918. He pointed out here "that the business of the Government would be simplified if administrative units were smaller and homogenous. There is no doubt that this advantage would be gained by forming an administrative unit of the Oriya-speaking tracts." "This position of Orissa in the province of Bihar and Orissa," he continued, "was assigned without consulting Orissa. The despatch of the Government of India (Lord Harding's despatch) which resulted in the creation of a new Province shows the relics, if not the survival, of the old policy of expediency which treats millions of peoples as a pawn on the chess-board." He went on to say, "the Reform proposals are in response to a new sense of self-esteem which the war had awakened. The past history of Orissa is replete with achievements in various fields of human activity. They have always been a source of inspiration to the present generation. This inspiration feeds the national consciousness, which is gaining in intensity with the advance of past national progress, which the labours or men engaged in research work bring to light; Orissa will not yield to the Biharis the position of an intermediary ruling race. If the present position is not improved, there will be friction, which is not desirable in the interests of both Bihar and Orissa."[60]

This session of the U.U.C. was firm in its demand that the Oriya linguistic union was essential for the undertaking of any reform.

On the eve of Montague's visit, steps were taken by U.U.C. in 1917 to publish a paper in order to carry on propaganda work throughout Orissa. It has already been mentioned that U.U.C. did not have a journal of its own, the bulletin which had come out in 1907, having stopped only after two issues of publication. Therefore, the necessity had always been felt about a paper, which would be an exclusive organ for the U.U.C. On 5 December 1917, with the donations of some persons, came out the long awaited paper, 'The Oriya' in English under the editorship of M.S. Das.[61] 'Utkala Dipika' commended the paper highly and requested the public to patronise it.[62]

However, not all this enthusiasm about the publication of 'The Oriya' could conceal the gradual waning of influence of this ageing leader who was now not keeping good health. Towards the end of 1918, M.S. Das announced his retirement from U.U.C. and also from the editorship of 'The Oriya'.[63] Soon after, Brajasunder Das, the closest follower of M.S.Das and the secretary of the U.U.C. also resigned.[64] M.S.Das attributed his resignation from the U.U.C. to utter physical exhaustion, and as reasons for his stepping down from the editorship of the paper, he cited the lack of promised financial help.[65] His dissociation from the U.U.C., came as a great surprise to the common people. 'Utkala Dipika' wrote in its editorial on 5 January 1919, "the Grand Old Man has laid down his arms. The young veteran to whom Orissa owes the special meeting of the Utkal Conference has laid aside his portfolio and 'The Oriya' is now to go rudderless . . .

"'The Oriya' was the paper of the nation or race. It appeared with the nation's tribute. No one has paid a pice from his pocket. Mr. Das was the editor from the very beginning and he says that he undertook the editorial responsibility on certain understanding with the U.U.C. Committee. What he says is true. But the public has a right to know when was this understanding negotiated and settled for?

"'The Oriya' was given the start with all the effusion of national spirit and enthusiasm as if without it, Orissa would go to the limbo of vanity..."

The open criticism of M.S. Das' decision by an important paper of the time, which had once been a great supporter of his, showed that his image was losing its shine and after long years of his unchallenged dominance, it appeared that the Oriyas wanted to taste a different leadership.

In the 14th session held at Cuttack on April 1919 Gopabandhu Das, a young leader from Puri district and the founder of Satyavadi School, was the President and M.S. Das was present there.[66] The latter was requested to make a speech. In his speech, he poured forth his patriotic feelings. At the same time, he did not keep it a secret that he was extremely hurt by the open campaign directed against him. While narrating his relationship with the U.U.C. he said that, when he had initiated it, there was not a single soul with whom he could have discussed its course; he was a lone figure who brought it up brick by brick, and presented it to the people. Since then, it had been rolling on and had been gathering leaders. With an element of bitterness, he added that his exit from the U.U.C. was perhaps for the good of the organisation itself, as he was an autocratic, immodest and whimsical person to some people.[67]

Gopabandhu in his reply paid rich tributes to him and pointed out that history would certainly recognise contribution of M.S.Das towards the Oriya nationalism as a great act. It was he, Gopabandhu Das added, who first nurtured the idea of national union, and felt sad that M.S. Das was being criticised by some young people.[68]

This session passed resolutions relating to the amalgamation of the Oriya tracts into a single province and the declarations of Oriya as a court language in the outlying tracts. Gopabandhu had already been associated with the Indian National Congress and

in this meeting, he indicated sufficiently that his interest also lay in the wider sphere of the all India problem.[69]

The next session was held at Puri in December the same year. This was presided over for the first time by a lawyer from Sambalpur, Chandrasekhar Behara.[70] In this session it was decided to form an Oriya preservation fund. Consequently a committee of ten was constituted consisting mostly of influential persons from different places, with Gopabandhu Das as the secretary. It was decided that the secretary's office would be maintained at Chakradharpur in the Singhbhum district. Ananta Misra was requested to campaign on behalf of the fund and S.B. Rath (the editor, 'Asa') was entrusted with the collection of donations through his paper. Bhagabat Prasad Mahapatra from Balasore and Chandrasekhar Behera from Sambalpur were also included as members. Some of its other members were Someswar Singh of Madhya Pradesh, Krushna Chandra Acharya and Kanhu Kisore Pani of Singhbhum.[71] This session attempted to draw U.U.C. closer to the All India Congress. Gopabandhu had already explained to the people in the preceding session the significance of a broader concept of nationalism which would envelop the whole of India. Chandrasekhar Behera carried on this message in the 15th session. He pointed out that, when the neighbours of Orissa had taken a longer leap under the British administration Oriyas were still stagnating.[72] Utkal Union Conference had been created primarily to uplift the condition of the Oriyas. Now the time had come when the Conference should join the All India Congress and present the Orissan problem on their platform through regular representations during Congress sessions.[73]

As already pointed out the U.U.C. had made it clear in the beginning that it should take a pro-British stand. It was maintaining distance from the Congress organisation that was dominated by leaders from other provinces under the apprehension that it would ignore the Oriya problem.

But the speech of Chandrasekhar Behera marked a significant change in the traditional tone of the presidents in the U.U.C. A different mood was in evidence in the 14th and 15th sessions and the assembled masses appeared to be carried away by the ideals of Congress. It has been said elsewhere in the book that the British Government was not particularly, sympathetic to the Oriya cause. In fact, a host of writings and speeches attempted to bring this point home, yet a sizeable number of prominent U.U.C. members were not willing to accept it. In 1916, at the 12th session of the U.U.C. held at Balasore, Sudam Nayak said, ". . . the tradition is that the Oriyas are loyal and law-abiding. Thank God, the evil that prevails and predominates in other parts of India has not reached to contaminate Orissa. The Oriyas want their chiefs should co-operate with them. They have been from generation to generation taught to be loyal."[74] It would be recalled that, by the time such a speech was made, the new province of Bihar and Orissa had already been constituted but without the amalgamation of Ganjam. This move was criticised through out the province and even the U.U.C. used its platform to express its indignation at the unsympathetic action. However, leaders like Sudam Nayak had a good following and they were not prepared to accept any change in the original policy of the U.U.C. and to drift to the Congress camp. Even the political adversaries of M.S.Das agreed that loyalty to the British Government and policy of appeasement laid down by the great Oriya leader were expedient at the beginning. However, when the U.U.C. leaders did not show any sign of relenting they began to question the contemporaneity of the organisation. The Congress wave was already intensifying and a larger number of people were being drawn towards it. A better strategy perhaps would have been to allow liberal discussions about the Congress even from the platform of the U.U.C., but the U.U.C. took a very uncompromising view.

Many felt that the U.U.C. was only a personal gamble of a few aristocratic Oriyas led by M.S. Das, who had only charmed the people as demagogues and that the organisation was for the henchmen of the British Government. These people also felt that it was just a 'one-man-show', a sort of 'magician's hypnotism' that hardly evoked any genuine national feeling.[75] The organisation had an emotional birth but once the initial stage was over, the people started assessing the real value of the organisation. Even the purpose and administrative efficiency of the institution were put to question. It has already been indicated that the U.U.C. was structured on a democratic basis. However, all the democratic principles it stood for seemed to have been eroded with time. There was a sense of belonging to a larger mass at the beginning, but slowly people were disenchanted to find that there was not much for them to do with its framework. The executive body was just handpicked rather than elected.[76] It had also not formulated its constitution and had failed to spell out its modus operandi clearly.[77] The U.U.C. had proclaimed that it was a people's body but the people were kept in the dark about its administrative and financial position. The non-maintenance of a list of its members also created misgivings in the public eye, as the differentiation between delegates and visitors could never be made.[78] As regards the paper, 'The Oriya' which was to serve as the public medium of the organisation, the situation was more or less the same. M.S.Das was in sole charge of it. This move invited a lot of criticism and in many quarters, it was felt that an editorial committee would have proved better.[79]

If the amalgamation was the main goal of the U.U.C. it was served best in term of influence and support, when the sessions were held in outlying areas. This was only to be expected because the sufferers themselves were the organisers. But it was a pity that the U.U.C. overlooked this factor and till 1920, 17 years after its inception, it always chose a venue in the main Orissa excepting

only on three occasions, and all three of them were in the Ganjam district. True, there would have been much greater difficulty in organising the meetings in Singhbhum or in Midnapore as the main organisers hailed mostly from the coastal areas of Orissa. That would, however, have intensified the agitation in these areas, which was of paramount importance. The result of this restricted choice of the venue hardly fostered a sense of belonging amongst the Oriyas of the outlying areas and indeed a true participation was a far cry for these people. The session at Parlakimedi was only a pleasant exception in the general trend when 3 delegates from Midnapore and 20 from Vizag attended the session.[80] Unfamiliarity with its leaders and its functions caused the masses in these areas gradually to drift away from the organisation. Further, it was not until 1915, when this Conference held its session in Sambalpur that a president was chosen from Singhbhum. In each session only resolutions were passed but there was no mechanism to examine how these were being implemented.[81]

The decline of the U.U.C. as a mass-force was evident soon. In the 1906 December session, it was brought to light that a number of branch associations, which were earlier constituted, had disappeared into oblivion already. However, the mood was one of euphoria and no preventive steps were actually taken to stall this downward march. Later on, in 1915, when Ananta Mishra went to Midnapore, he reported that the people were expressing their dissatisfaction over the information system of the U.U.C. and that they were not being intimated about its sittings. These only underlined the fact that the U.U.C. had utterly failed to collect representatives from all the Oriya-speaking tracts. 'Asa' lamented in its edition of 18 March 1918: "In the last thirteen years even though the idealism and purpose of the organisation have been well maintained, it had not achieved as much as it should have."

The leaders in U. U. C. squabbled among themselves and many even withdrew to form their own individual associations. Though they could never come to compete with the U.U.C., this bickering in the organisational ranks and the consequent splinter groups brought down the importance of U.U.C. considerably.[82] The Surangi chief, highlighting the squabbles inside the party, wrote in a letter to 'Utkala Dipika' that the U.U.C. was going to be eclipsed soon owing primarily to the misunderstanding between its chief organisers.[83]

The role of the feudatory chiefs also left a wide credibility gap in the mind of the common man. They largely adorned the U.U.C. sessions and spoke of nationalism and socio-economic development of the people but many of them were perpetrators of the worst type of exploitation in their own states. Consequently, the masses gradually failed to respond to the call of the organisation that was dominated by these people and their expectations turned into bewilderment.

In all fairness to M.S. Das, it must be added that he started the U.U.C. virtually single-handedly, and put his heart and soul into the organisation. He presented the organisation to the people and urged them to join in the endeavour. To him ". . . this organisation was the ocean of national life that held millions of life-drops . . ." And he expected the people, "to jump into his vast ocean and mingle their own life drops in it." He was the brain behind the Oriya movement[84] and the U.U.C. promised to be the centre of discussion for various problems relating to the Oriyas. In a period when the Oriya tracts were so widely scattered, providing such a common platform and instilling a feeling of brotherhood amongst the Oriyas, whatever may have been the degree of success, was no mean achievement. This organisation was being looked upon as the only national forum and M.S. Das was its soul.[85] Although the organisation promised a democratic character, M.S. Das probably felt that the people were yet not ready to elect their own

representatives or decide about its policy. This seems to have prompted him to act as its 'mentor' and consequently he took it upon himself to formulate its policy.

With all its structural loopholes and other shortcomings, the organisation of M.S. Das was still the edifice of Oriya nationalism and continued to be dear to the hearts of almost all the Oriyas until 1920.

Activities through Press and Public Fraternities

Probably the most significant contribution of the U. U. C. was the mass consciousness it generated in the society and in its trail public activities proliferated in several areas assuming diverse shapes. Various other fraternities and newspapers also came into being in its wake striving to push the Oriya nationalism along the path of success.

Newspapers

Since the late 19th century, a number of celebrated scholars and litterateurs had been meeting frequently at Cuttack for literary discussions. In January 1897, they brought out a literary magazine, 'Utkala Sahitya' under the editorship of Biswanath Kar.[86] They also formed the Cuttack Literary Association on 7 May 1903[87] which continues till today and functions as an important platform for the men of letters and social workers. It also preserves a large mass of valuable documents of the 19th and 20th centuries.

In 1905, the 'Star of Utkala' an English weekly came out from Cuttack which was edited by Kshirod Chandra Roy.[88] It was a paper which dealt very candidly with the Oriya national agitation and other allied problems. But it went out of favour with the government for the frankness of its views and was banned. It was however revived in 1922 under Lakshminarayan Sahu's editorship.

The same year, Brajasundar Das brought out a literary monthly named ''Mukura' which encouraged nationalist literature. The young intellectuals who later constituted the 'Satyavadi era', started their literary career through this magazine.[89]

Newspapers and magazines gradually started appearing in great numbers. 'Chitrotpala', 'Madhukosa', 'Rasmi' and 'Young Utkal' came out in quick succession in 1907.[90] The Oriyas began to feel the urge to ventilate their feeling through their writings, which were purported to preserve and advance their national life. Gopabandhu Das, the most important personality in the Oriya nationalist movement also found that the press was the most effective medium to communicate with the people. In 1913, he brought out a journal called 'Satyavadi' which expressed his views on Oriya nationalism. In 1919 he founded the weekly 'Samaj' which served as a vehicle for his political ideas. The journalistic language, for the first time, started drawing heavily on the reservoir of colloquial words used by common Oriyas. The weekly became extremely popular and received wide circulation. All his papers were printed by the press at Satyavadi. After his death in 1928, this press was shifted to Puri and finally to Cuttack where it still runs successfully and his paper 'Samaj' continues today as the premier daily of Orissa.

'Asa' which made its maiden appearance in 1913, was the most important weekly after 'Utkala Dipika'. It was published from Ganjam and acted as a successful communication link between southern Orissa and the mainland. It was a powerful Oriya nationalist paper and supported the U.U.C. activities. It also encouraged the Satyavadi group and invited articles from them. However, later on, the paper failed to subscribe to the views of Satyavadi when the school set up by Gopabandhu was converted into a national school. 'Utkala Dipika', 'Samaj' and 'Asa', were the important trio dealing with Oriya nationalism. After 1920, 'Samaj'became the voice of the Congress organisation in Orissa and criticised the so-called 'moderates', who would still maintain a soft, conciliatory policy towards the British Government. 'Asa' was pro-moderate for a long time and later on expressed a desire for a rapport between the two groups. 'Utkala Dipika' the oldest

of the group, maintained an even tone with a pragmatic approach in the context of Oriya nationalism. All these three newspapers grew in popularity and in due course became dailies.

In 1924, 'Prajatantra' came out with Harekrishna Mahtab as the editor. It was a political weekly from Balasore and assumed great importance in a short period after it had joined the Oriya issue of amalgamation and separation. The paper advocated the Oriya movement through the Congress organisation.

Newspaper started appearing from the feudatory states too. In 1923 'Gadajata Basini' was published from Talcher. It also centred its interest around the Oriya nationalism with special reference to the problems relating to the feudatory and hill states.

With the advent of Civil Disobedience in 1930, there was again a glut in newspapers and pamphlets pouring forth from various camps in Orissa. 'Satya Samachara' under the joint editorship of Brajasundar Das and Gopal Chandra Praharaj appeared in 1930. It desperately wanted the Oriya movement to intensify its activities disregarding the Congress idealism. It therefore ventilated all its criticism of the Congress in the most vociferous manner. The paper appealed to the people to turn their faith towards the U.U.C. again which had lost its vitality since 1920. Some of the views expressed under the columns of the paper have been extracted in the following chapters. During the same period, many other papers like 'Samskara', 'Svarajya', 'Yugavina', 'Yugabartta', 'Nababharata', 'Banabina', 'Odia Siksya Darpana' also appeared on the scene although their import was not felt.[91]

Most of these magazines and newspapers that took birth during the first two decades of the 20th century did not always deal with the Oriya political problem directly. They focused on the socio-economic and educational issues and through them intended to foster the nationalist spirit.

Clubs and Societies

The sentiment of nationalism not only appeared to stimulate the press but also inspired the founding of a large number of social, socio-political and educational fraternities. Such organisations came up both in Orissa as well as in outlying areas, including the feudatory states.

Since 1907, one 'Narayana Parisada' [92] had been in existence in the Simhapur village of Madhupur. This was formed by the progressive Brahmins to fight the social evils like child marriage and dowry-system, among others. It organised one Sanskrit 'Tole' (School), and one upper primary School. The people at Surangi similarly set up an association called 'Siksha Barddhini' for the spread of education and for the development of agriculture and industry.[93] Some educated young men of Salepur held a meeting on 2 October 1915 and decided to set up one 'Siksha Bibarddhini Samiti' for the spread and development of education.[94] There was already a 'Chandrasekhar Samiti' in Puri with the purpose of holding discussions on literature.[95] It also dealt with the problems of education and in one of their meetings, the members evinced keen interest in the educational pattern and facilities in different western countries. This association also laid stress on the female education. With the initiative of L.N. Sahu 'Sahitya-Prachara Samgha' was set up which aimed mainly at reviving the old Oriya literature through fresh publications. It also pledged itself to translate into Oriya literary classics of the world. A large number of scholars in Orissa displayed a keen interest in it and became its members by paying Rs. 25. Another association called 'Prachi Samiti' was set up by Prof. Arttaballabha Mohanty which strove to retrieve the old Oriya manuscripts and decipher them.[96]

Apart from the various associations that had been formed primarily with the objective of literary, educational and social developments, there appeared a few other organisations which were more political in outlook. They fought for the amalgamation

of Oriya-tracts and although small in scope, acted as props for the U.U.C. and became very active as well as popular, mostly in the outlying tracts.

These associations met quite frequently and tried to take the agitation to the villages. They strove to safeguard the interest of Oriya language in schools and offices, presented petitions and memoranda to the government representatives who came from time to time to collect information and data and whenever possible, participated in the U.U.C. sessions. The importance of these small associations was felt by all. 'Asa' was quoted as reporting in 1916 on the starting of educational movement in the outlying areas of Orissa.[97] It suggested that by imparting education in Oriya and by organising literary societies, the Oriya nationalism could forestall its downward movement in the outlying Oriya-speaking areas of Orissa.

The 'Ganjam Oriya Association' and the 'Jeypore Orissa Association' had come into being meanwhile.[98] They held meetings and expressed views in favour of union with Orissa. 'Singhbhum Utkal Association' held its first meeting in 1917 and discussed various problems facing the Oriyas.[99] It clamoured for the introduction of Oriyas in schools, courts and offices and despatched appeals to the government to this effect. In Jamshedpur, there were also 'Golmundi Oriya Samaj' and 'Binapani Club'. They were carrying on the campaign by holding meetings, distributing pamphlets and by staging Oriya plays.[100] The students in Midnapore organised an 'Utkal Association' by 1929 to carryon the movement actively.[101] In December 1917, there was a mammoth meeting in Calcutta and 'Sambalpur Hitaisini' dated 10 November 1917 reported that it was attended by well over 7000 Oriyas. Many eminent Oriyas like Gopabandhu Das, Harihara Panda, B.N. Misra, Krushnamohan Pattanaik attended it. This meeting decided to set up the 'Calcutta Utkal Association' to work for getting the grievances of Oriyas in

Calcutta redressed through appeals to the government. There was yet another association called 'Prabasi Utkala Club' at Chittaranjan Avenue for mobilising the Oriyas with Prahlad Das as its Secretary.[102] 'Prajatantra' informed that Mahtab had organised another 'Oriya Association' at Calcutta in 1929 by uniting some young men of the place.[103] A Congress worker, Purna Chandra Bose re-established the 'Calcutta Oriya Association' after he was released from jail. This association, it was reported, was meant to help the Oriyas of Calcutta at the time of their need with its headquarters at 33, Tarachand Dutt Street.[104]

In 1912, an association came into being which had provisions for representations from the villages. This association became well known as the 'Praja Pratinidhi Sabha'.[105] Soon after its formation the 'Star of Utkal', dated 20 July 1912, wrote, "We hail with delight the formation of a new association by the name of the Praja Pratinidhi Sabha founded at Cuttack on a solid basis. On Sunday last, more than two hundred and fifty representatives assembled from more than 250 villages or mallas." It mainly dealt with the peasants' rights to the land, their progress and developments. It became extremely popular and soon opened up branches in different places.

The formation of various societies and debating clubs and the presence of an active press in Orissa in the early decades of the 20th century only indicate that Oriya nationalism had gathered sufficient momentum and that it would be difficult to thwart it any longer. The pan-Oriya movement nucleated around U.U.C., but slowly radiated in different directions and permeated into the whole of Orissa through the activities of a multitude of agencies.

Role of the Intellectuals

The intellectuals, be they philosophers, novelists, poets, playwrights or historians have traditionally played significant roles in all the nationalist revolutions of the world. Not only do they reach the minds of the people through their writings, they also

subject every institution of the society to the test of reason and through that foster the idea of change and progress.

On the Indian scene, those who had comparatively earlier contacts with the British and consequently had a longer exposure to the western style of education imbibed the idea of progressiveness and formed an enlightened class. Raja Ram Mohun Ray of Bengal was the leader of this group and he was venerated as 'The father of modem India'.

In Orissa, the wind of change was yet to be felt. It was only after the language agitation in the 19th century that the need for awakening was seriously felt. Just as the British impact unwittingly germinated the Indian nationalism, the Oriya nationalist feeling drew inspiration to some extent from the Bengali renaissance and their social reform ideas.

The Oriya literary and social ideas in the late 19th century centred virtually around three figures -- Radhanath Ray, Phakirmohan Senapati and Madhusudan Rao.

Radhanath had started writing in Bengali but subsequently switched over to Oriya.[106] He was basically a nature poet and in his works of art, we find him widely depicting the scenic beauty of Orissa. As a critic put it, "almost anywhere a sensitive, educated Oriya moves, a few lines of Radhanath's poetry come naturally to his lips . . ."[107] Radhanath's 'Mahajatra', 'Darabara', 'Bharata Gitika' were nationalist lyrics. Through some of his writings, he always attempted to convey to the Oriya readers the ideas of western philosophers.[108]

Madhusudan Rao, a great believer in Brahmo Samaj[109] was influenced by the enlightened ideas of the West and contributed a great deal towards social reformation through his writings. He also displayed a natural penchant for independent thought and strove towards freedom from religious dogmas. Deep nationalist feelings run through his poems, 'Pruthibi prati' and 'Janmabhumi'. Another collection of poems by him, 'Utkala gatha' centred round

the Oriya nationalist ideas. Some of these were chosen by the U.U.C. to be sung during its sessions[110]

The credit of compiling a 'first book' for beginners in Oriya language also goes to Madhusudan Rao.[111] This book although narrow in scope, manifests his distinct style and he attempted to bring upon the young minds the essence of nationalism with the help of such simple word formations and imageries that it is considered by many to belong to the genre of classics.

Phakirmohan Senapati's imagination was greatly stirred by the language crisis and he vowed to take it upon himself to add a new dimension and respectability to Oriya literature.[112] He also set up the 'Utkal Press' at Balasore in 1868 which published some notable journals of the 19th century in Orissa, as will be pointed out later. Phakirmohan has indeed been regarded as the 'father of modern Oriya literature'. His writings depict in an innovative, inimitable, colloquial style, the conditions that prevailed in the society, its superstitions and the political chaos that confronted Orissa. Not simply contended to point his fingers of indignation at the maladies, Phakirmohan prescribed through his writings, also the path to get out of this predicament. His autobiography brought to light in a lucid manner all the darkness prevailing in the feudatory areas where he had worked for a long time. It also gave graphic descriptions of the exploitation by the rulers and the abject backwardness of their subjects.[113] The supposedly immutable social traditions were bitterly criticised through his various short stories and novels. His poetic creations like 'Utkala Krusaka', 'Utkala Bhumi', 'Utkala Yubaka' were the products of his deep involvement in the Oriya nationalist ideas and inspired thousands of his fellowmen with their message.[114] Perhaps the single most important aspect of Phakirmohan's writings, particularly of the prose was their language and style. The influence of the neighbouring languages, not only from Bengali, was so intense that most of the other writers of the time found it difficult to extricate themselves from their dominance.[115]

The language of the common urban people under this influence was fast losing its distinctiveness. Phakirmohan recognised this dangerous trend and was determined to stall this process of language. He very meticulously chose the words which were current amongst the unsophisticated villagers. This, among other things, encouraged the readers to shake off their diffidence in using their mother-tongue in its genuine form. Moreover, colloquial style instantly touched the heart of the masses as well as other fellow writers. His writings enjoy a special status in the Oriya literature till today.

Close on the heels of the trio, appeared the famous lyricist of the late 19th and early 20th century, Gangadhar Meher of Sambalpur. He was brought up in a poor family and received no modern education. Despite all these, or perhaps because of this background, his writings expressed the spontaneity and natural freshness of a poetic genius that is still a proud possession of the Oriya literature. The Oriya agitation which was quite intense in Sambalpur in the late 19th century produced, as has been noted, a tremendous impact on Oriya literature. During this agitation, Gangadhar Meher wrote his appealing poems which were so poignant and full of human content that they immediately caught on.[116] The traditional values and the sacred duty to uphold them was the theme of many of his poems and the poet tried to inculcate amongst the common people a sense of attachment to their motherland.[117] His writings therefore did not betray a special fancy for western ideas instead; they were very much home-bound and appealed to the people tremendously.

The period following that of Gangadhar Meher was dominated by the duo, 'Bal-Praharaj'. These two men tried to represent through their writings the Oriya culture in its true nature. Nanda Kisore Bal, immortalised as the 'Village Bard' of Orissa, set his poetic creations against the background of unsophisticated, serene beauty of the Oriya countryside and gave a special status to the

day-to-day lives in villages through his writings. In addition, Nandakisore revived the folk tradition in literature and endeared himself through his innumerable folk-songs.[118] Gopal Chandra Praharaj, the compiler of the most authentic and voluminous dictionary in the Oriya language was a gifted essayist who treated extremely serious issues of the society with rare wit.[119] Praharaj was very closely associated with the activity of the U.U.C. and his writings therefore showed a keen awareness of the problems facing the Oriyas.

M.S. Das' speeches and writings also helped to intensify the spirit of nationalism in literature in the early 20th century. Lakhmikanta Mahapatra, Padma Charan Patnaik, Dinabandhu Mohanty, Kuntala Kumari Sabat, Sribatsa Panda, Balukeswar Misra, Harihar Das and Biswanath Kar were a few of the notable writers and poets who illuminated the Oriya literary scene in the early 20th century. And each of them dealt with some aspects of the nationalist problem of Orissa. Because of limitations of space only an attempt has been made here to bring into focus the general development of literary ideas through some of the important personalities of the time as are directly relevant to the theme of the work[120]

In this context, much attention must be paid to the 'Satyavadi tradition' initiated by Gopabandhu Das which had a tremendous impact on literature dealing with nationalism and the social reformation.[121] The group around Gopabandhu Das was known as 'Satyavadi group' and as we have mentioned earlier, started a monthly called 'Satyavadi' and a weekly called 'Samaj'.

Gopabandhu Das' writings reveal his intense feeling for his land and its people. The poor and the downtrodden never alighted from his thoughts and their sufferings came up most in his writings. Love for the humanity and understanding of the poor brethren were the essence of his poems.[122] His literary creations always carried a special message for the exploited people of Orissa and

he attempted through the pages as much as through his fieldwork, to instil a new faith in them. Many of his poems e.g. Dharmapada, gave a fresh life and splendour to the anecdotes of the land that infused among the people a desire to take pride in their tradition. In his 'Bandira Atmakatha' (The Prisoner Speaks) he once again displayed a deep sympathy for the people and brought to the surface the essence of nationalism.[123] In his immortal lines he said, ". . . Let my body mingle with the soil of this country and let my countrymen tread over it. Let all the potholes on the path to freedom be filled up with my flesh and bones . . ."

Nilakantha Das, a scholar and close associate of Gopabandhu, made outstanding contributions in the field, of literature. His essays like 'Mo Nisa', 'Niti o Prakriti', 'Pratibha Puja o Pratima Puja' echoed his mutinous voice against the social set-up. He laid bare the superstitions that had polluted the entire social atmosphere and had emasculated the people of Orissa and laid stress on a fresh and free national life.

Godavaris Misra, another colleague of Gopabandhu and a distinguished educationist was a poet and journalist of high calibre. He started contributing regularly to various magazines since his student days in Calcutta. The anthologies of 'Kalika Kisalaya' were the products of this period[124] He also wrote many poems that reflected his rare sensibility while he roved round the outlying Oriya speaking areas campaigning for amalgamation.[125] His ballads based on historical anecdotes and legends of Orissa are superb and assure their author immortality as a poet.[126] He has left behind a considerable mass of prose writings also in the form of short stories, essays and adapted novels. All that he wrote breathes warm patriotism.[127] Krupasindhu Misra was the reputed historian in this group.

The emergence of the middle class intellectuals has always formed the core in any revolution. This class is most responsive to the call of socialism, equality and human rights, for people of

this class have the ability to look beyond their time. It is this group again which holds before the common man a lens, as it were, through which he can see what threatens him socially, culturally or politically and which makes him aware of the precipice that lie ahead.

In Orissa too, the responsibility of arousing the mass consciousness to the dangers posed to their language in the coastal districts and subsequently in Sambalpur was taken up by these intellectuals. In the beginning of the 20th century, they endeavoured to enrich their literature and through it to increase public awareness to guard against a future threat to their language or to their culture. In this attempt, many borrowed liberally from the Western ideas that spoke of freedom of thought from superstition and blind belief and equality of men in society. It was hoped by them that only when the Oriyas were united under a common fold of language and culture and in fact were inspired by a sense of belonging would their political union come about. These intellectuals also knew that freedom from exploitation and want would go a long way in forging the Oriyas together and accordingly essayed through their writings to achieve this end. In summing up, it must be said that intellect for intellect's sake was not the motto that ran through the minds of these intellectuals. They identified their task as something more down-to-earth that of constantly illuminating for their brethren the right directions in all spheres of life so that Oriyas and Orissa could appear distinct to others.

Response of Various Cross-Section of the Society to the Oriya Nationalism

The Students

Around the second half of the 19th century, a number of educational institutions were opened and young men joined them in large numbers. Their financial condition did not always allow them to go to the cities for receiving education. Schools in the

neighbourhood naturally opened before them new horizons now. However, their experience in the schools was not entirely pleasant; for they had to learn an alien language and their teachers were all outsiders speaking different tongues and they were often made targets of ridicule by non-Oriya students.[128]

By the end of the 19th century, however the students were beginning to forge solidarity. The connotation of the word nationalism and its implementation in Western Europe, added a new dimension to their imagination. Many dismembered states of Europe succeeded in unifying and freeing themselves. As they read these stories and discussed them, they felt inspired. The Congress too created an atmosphere of enthusiasm; young boys in schools and colleges were full of excitement with the hope of associating themselves in the national struggle through the Congress. The youth activities in other provinces of India, who had been exposed to Western education earlier, also started inspiring the Oriya students.

The emergence of M.S. Das may be regarded as a landmark in the history of the Oriya movement through the students. He emphasised potentiality of the students'faction and formed the 'Orissa Graduate and Undergraduate Association' on 17 March 1888,[129] an act which was a unique thing to do in Orissa. This association aimed at spreading education in Orissa and held discussions on the socio-economic aspects of the country.

With the formation of the U.U.C. in 1903, the people found a common instrument with the help of which the movement could be shaped and directed. As a supporting organisation, it was thought proper to encourage the students to form an association. It is believed that this idea was mooted by Miss Sailabala (the adopted daughter of M.S. Das).[130] On 18 July 1904, the 'Young Utkal Association' was formed at Cuttack with 100 students as its members.[131] The objectives of this Association were (i) to organise the youth so as to make them efficient members of the

society, (ii) to give them proper guidance and direction for a better future for themselves,(iii) to guide them to become worthy children of the soil, (iv) to establish good relationship between different sects and groups, (v) to train them properly so that when the necessity comes they would unhesitatingly come forward to sacrifice their interest for their mother land, (vi) to finance the poor students for higher studies, (vii) to train up the youth in crafts and small-scale industries, (viii) to set up public libraries for students, (ix) to arrange meetings and get-togethers through which the young people would come into contact with experienced social workers, politicians and teachers, and (x) to encourage the students to take keen interest in various games and sports. Completion of school final examination was stipulated as pre-requisite for its membership. In addition, the student-members were required to obtain permission of the guardians before being eligible to join in.[132]

This organisation started functioning in a very well organised way. It also did a good deal of social service during the time of calamitous flood, draught and epidemic. Godavaris Misra says in his autobiography that, around 1908, he was the Secretary of this Association and Gopabandhu Das, Brajasundar Das and Biswanath Kar were close associates in it. This association used to have two sittings-the secret sessions were held in the backyard of Brajasundar's residence where revolutionary poems were recited in Oriya and Bengali by Godavris and Subodh Hazra; the open sittings at Gopabandhu's place in the normal school lane, where the young members practised physical training.[133] The members could also take training in the aluminium factory, carpentry and art wares. In one of its meetings in 1912 held to welcome the Matriculate-examinees, M.S. Das who was then its president suggested that the students should spend some time with the villagers and should be acquainted with their problems. Social service should constitute one important purpose in student life, apart from studies.[134]

Gradually a general consciousness among the students was generated which did not remain confined to main Orissa but spread among the Oriya students studying elsewhere too including in the feudatory states.[135] The Oriya students, studying abroad came forward to give financial help.[136]

House No.9 of Panchanan Ghosh Lane in Calcutta served for a long time as a lodging house (mess) for all the Oriya students in Calcutta. It became the nucleus of student activities.[137] Here they deliberated on the growing problems relating to Orissa and the Oriyas. Quite a number of Oriya students studying at Calcutta would not speak in Oriya at public places for fear of being ridiculed and even though the Oriyas formed about one-tenth of the population in Calcutta they did not have any voice whatsoever in the affairs of the city. There were thousands of Oriya workers and a good number of wealthy families who preferred to adopt the Bangali culture and language to avoid humiliation. This made the Oriya students quite conscious of the tragic situation of the Oriyas and they decided to remedy it. For instance, they decided, in the face of embarrassing experiences, to put on pink turbans which M.S. Das had introduced in the Utkal Union Conference as the symbol of the Oriyas.[138]

Not always did the student activities receive appreciation from the educated people. Many people who were opposed to the Oriya union held key official positions and attempted to put a number of hindrances in the path of the movement for union. Inspectors for schools in many cases discouraged the students from joining the conferences apprehending political activities. In many cases, teachers and guardians too opposed the students'participation in such associations.[139] But these obstacles could not suppress their enthusiasm.[140]

Gradually, however, the activities of the students lapsed into a low key. This was primarily because M.S. Das could not spare enough time to take active interest in the students. Most of the

founder members of the students association had also finished their education and the in-coming members did not find much interest in it. Criticism also surfaced about the activities of the 'Young Utkal Association'. 'Asa' commented, "the Young Utkal Association is filled with air of class favouritism and the constant check it received at the hand of the present President who is a bureaucrat. It has practically dwindled into a college debating class."[141] Thus within a decade of its emergence the 'Young Utkal Association' became virtually defunct.

Subsequently, a new 'Students' Conference' was constituted which aimed at creating a strong and healthy social atmosphere, fostering a spirit of solidarity amongst the Orissa students and making them sympathetic, useful and influential citizens of the rising Orissa.[142]

After a few years of active existence, this organisation also faded. In March 1918, when the Utkal Union Conference arranged its annual meeting with Phakirmohan Senapati as its President friction between the U.U.C. and the students came to a flash-point. The students who had earlier decided under their leader Jadumani Mangaraj to be volunteers at the session refused to do so.[143] This group of students thought that the refusal of Mr. Debiprasad Sarbadhikari, the Calcutta University Vice-Chancellor, to preside over the 'Students' Conference' (which usually sat along with the Utkal Union Conference) was made at the instance of M.S. Das. This resulted in a great deal of bitterness and the students were divided into two camps.[144]

The task of co-ordination and cohesion in the working of the two factions of the 'Students' Conference' and of the earlier 'Young Utkal Association' created a lot of confusion. Moreover, the occasional friction between these groups bred a lot of ill-feeling among the student community. In order to resolve the crisis, a meeting of the students was convened on 8 March 1919 at Cuttack Town Hall with Kalpataru Das in the chair.[145] After long

deliberations, it was agreed to sink all differences and that there would be only one 'Utkal Students'Association'. It was scheduled to be formally founded on the ensuing conference, which along with the 'Utkal Union Conference' session was constituted under the chairmanship of Prof. Jogesh Chandra Roy in which the secretary was chosen from among the students. It was decided further that this committee would frame the constitution and prepare the agenda for the students.

The 14th session of the Utkal Union Conference met on 19 April 1919 in the Cuttack Municipality garden under the presidentship of Gopabandhu Das. Using the same rostrum on the first day of the Conference, the students held the maiden session of the 'Utkal Students'Association' under the presidentship of Jagabandhu Singh.[146]

The 'Utkal Students'Association'started enlarging its sphere of activity by opening branch associations in different districts. Healthy competition in various fields was encouraged among students at the conferences of different districts[147] and they were urged to fight castes and such other social evils.[148] The students continued to meet periodically and confined their activities mainly to the academic sphere. By 1927, however, the authorities in the Education Department banned the students' organisations in all colleges in Orissa except the one in Ravenshaw College. This subdued the activities of the students' organisations considerably.

It was the opinion of 'Samaj', however, that despite the impediments in carrying on its activities, the students'organisation still maintained its importance. It was the only channel through which they could identify themselves with a common language, common culture and traditions and could also attempt to fulfil their aspirations.[149]

Indeed, this organisation contributed in many ways towards the Oriya movement, which would be taken up in Chapters 6 and 7. The creation of the U.U.C. was a trumpet call to all factions

in the society and the students could not naturally sit idle; they too volunteered to contribute their mite for the cause.

Women

A rise in the consciousness among the people in Orissa also brought in a change in the life-style of its women. Gradually their attention was shifted to the virtues of education. In 1894, the zamindar of Bhadrak encouraged the girls to go for schooling by instituting a prize to the girl student who would stand first in the Balasore district.[150] It made a great news of the time when a girl named Netromani Dei of the Chanahatta (Cuttack District) school stood first among all the students, boys and girls, in the upper primary examination.[151] In Baud-Phulbani, a school started within the royal courtyard for 'the princess and the other girls' and Gangadhar Misra was the teacher.[152] The Girls'school at Cuttack (Gangamandir) attracted attention for good performances in the examination.[153] By 1895, there were 5 girls studying even in the Cuttack Medical School.[154] Many educated and progressive ladies also tried to help housewives and girls for getting trained in various vocations.[155]

Progress in education opened up a new vision for the Oriya women. Even then, it was not easy for women to ignore the age-old social taboos and go in for higher education. But a wind of change blowing already in other progressive provinces was being awaited eagerly.[156] Different social organisations also took interest in pushing forward the cause of women's education. The Orissa Association bore the expenses for Nirmala Bala Das and Narmada Kar for studying B.A. at Calcutta University.[157] Birupakshya Kar during his visit to Japan, America and England studied the educational pattern there and put forward many suggestions for the development of various education programmes including that of female education[158] By 1918, many people had started writing books on the education of women. Damodar Godanayak wrote 'Female education' which was recommended for every library and

was awarded a prize by the Text Book Committee of the Bihar and Orissa Government.[159] M.S. Das arranged an essay competition on female education and in April 1918, at the U.U.C. session, Ushabala Sahu won a prize donated by M.S. Das, for contributing the best essay on the subject.[160] Many women themselves started writing on the problems of their educational and social development. Some of them even went abroad, mostly to England, to receive higher education. Attempts were also made to provide some professional training for the widows. The Government started one Female Training School and granted ten scholarships of Rs. 10 each for widows who joined the school.[161] One Oriya monthly called 'Siksya Darpana' edited by Basanta Kumari Dei, created excitement in the ladies'circles all over Orissa.[162] The educational progress of women received much encouragement from the U.U.C. which stressed female education almost in every session.

This generated an increasing consciousness among the Oriya women. During the World War I, we find women appealing to Oriya youth to join the army should the nation desire it.[163]

Similarly, the non-cooperation movement in 1921 gave a great impetus to the activities of Oriya women. When this movement subsided, the Oriya women thought of organising an 'Utkal Women's Conference'. The initiative came from South Orissa. A couple of ladies like Rasamani Dei and Swarnalata Dei met at Swaraj Asram, Berhampur and founded the 'Utkal Women's Conference' (U.W.C.) which was to hold its first session in June 1924.[164] In the midst of tremendous enthusiasm, women from all over Orissa met in the Swaraj Asram at Berhampur on 30 June 1924. Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy of Bengal, who had come to preside over the Provincial Congress Committee session, presided over the Conference, which was attended by many celebrities like M.S.Das and Gopabandhu Das.[165] The occasion created excitement among women belonging to different classes.

Ladies of aristocratic families who would not otherwise come to the public gatherings also attended it. There were representation from all religious groups and sects and the participants showed keen interest in the discussion. The credit for making the meeting a success went to Sarala Devi, the most important woman leader of Orissa of the period. She was ably assisted by Rasamani Dei, Haimabati Dei and Kisorimani Dei.

Thereafter, Oriya women continued to organise many public gatherings.[166–170] On 2 August 1931, the U.W.C. met on a grand scale in Balasore.[171] The eminent literary figure, Kuntala Kumari Sabat was the president and Jahnabi Dei was the chairperson of the reception committee. Nearly 1200 people attended it. In this session, a central executive committee named 'All Orissa Women Association' was constituted. This was to consist of thirty members. Kuntala Kumari Sabat was made its president. Basanta Kumari Dei was its general secretary. Sarojini Choudhury and Kokila Dei became its joint secretaries and Jahnabi Dei was its treasurer.

The women of Orissa thus became active participants in the Oriya movement as it grew in intensity and the activities of the Congress organisation also started engaging their keen attention.

Backward Class and the Tribal People

A nationalist movement could be distinguished from any other movement as it is characterised by the deep impact it leaves behind. Once such a feeling is born, it spontaneously widens in scope and picks up in momentum. Thereafter no obstacle appears insurmountable. It is then like a whirlpool drawing everything into its current. The U.U.C. programmes for the removal of social exploitation and economic disparity and their stress on the spread of education among all classes including women and the socially marginalized backward classes had an impact on all concerned. Its federal structure also facilitated the spread of such ideas to the remote villagers. Newspapers started coming in, people showed

interest in the political discussions, and their children started going to schools. All this opened up a new vista of progress for all classes in the villages. The downtrodden particularly started pondering over their status in the social set-up and would not accept their exploitation and ostracism as a freak of destiny.

A letter, which appeared in an important newspaper, would reveal how the self-consciousness, perhaps the most significant character of nationalism, had taken roots in the backward society. The letter written by one Ramachandra Das from Cuttack, read "... In the modern Hindu society even though the Kantha ('Bauri', one of the scheduled castes) belongs to a lower strata, it is very much a part of the Hindu system of law; marriages are conducted according to the regulations of the 'Sastra' (Hindu scriptures). Bibhuti Bhanja's book of 'Ganesh bibhuti' shows that the 'Bauris' are children of Visvamitra, they are devotees of Vishnu. It is only since the time of Prataprudra that their social position has been brought down. I can not comprehend why they should be considered as untouchables today."[172] Such defiant attitudes drew strength from the spread of education.

During the First World War when tremendous amount of manpower was required for taking up various jobs, many tribal folks from different feudatory states were called upon by the military to work as 'coolies'. They were despatched to as far as Mesopotamia without of course any prior intimation or their consent. However, this information leaked out and consequently, the tribals in Mayurbhanj rebelled and refused to go.[173]

By 1920, the untouchables had formed their own association called 'the National Conference of the Scheduled Castes'.[174] In one of their sessions held at Mundalo village in Salepur, around 100 people from different groups of 'Dhobi', 'Pan', 'Kandara', 'Bauri' were present. Through its resolutions, it pressed for separate schools for the untouchables with the help of special grants as were provided to the girls'schools. It also urged that

free schooling be provided for all untouchables and demanded special favour and award of scholarships.[175]

Many smaller associations came into existence, which met more often and discussed their development. They were elated whenever the slightest attention was paid to their uplift. A news item in the 'Utkala Dipika' carried a report from a person belonging to one of the scheduled castes that "it is quite encouraging to learn, of the decision taken by the Government to send Sridhar Samal as the representative of the scheduled caste who happens to be our first graduate . . ."[176]

The educated class too took increasing interest in the amelioration of their condition. Satyavadi school had a special wing for the untouchables called 'Kadua Asram' founded by Gopabandhu Das.[177] He collected the untouchable boys wherever he went and got them admitted into this school. The strength of the students here grew in number and some of them rose to important positions in their later life.

The students' organisations often included the problems of the scheduled castes in their agenda and help was extended whenever it was sought.[178] This short report would indicate how in the wake of the U.U.C. the nationalist spirit was shaking every brick in the social structure that had been lying inert since long. It would also become clear from a later chapter that it was the tribal people who played a very decisive role in the amalgamation issue by foiling the attempts of Oriya leaders to unite Singhbhum with Orissa.

Satyavadi School and Nationalism

It is significant that in the beginning of the 20th century when many organisations and a host of important individuals engaged themselves in the task of redressing the political and socio-economic ills of Orissa, a small 'open air minor school', which later became a High School, was to play a vital role in shaping the history of the region. This school was the product of lofty idealism

of a few young intellectuals who were convinced that much of the evil could be eradicated through proper development and training of the young. They envisaged a school where the boys should, along with their studies, be taught the essence of life which would make them fuller men, courageous, confident and ready to work for the uplift of their brethren. These young intellectuals had before them the images of Eton, Harrow, Rugby and the Fergusson College of Pune.[179] Gopabandhu Das was the brain behind the school. Gopabandhu was himself greatly influenced by Harihar Das whom he had never seen.[180] Harihar Das who had died as early as 1872, had recommended a new type of education as a panacea for all types of social maladies. He was the founder of the Sanskrit College at Puri and coached the Collector, Mr. Beams Sanskrit and Oriya, himself learning Greek and English from him.

The influence of the Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj on Gopabandhu can also be identified. Ram Mohun Roy who founded the Brahmo Samaj in the 19th century aimed at accepting the western secularism and learning, and reforming Hinduism from within.[181] He valued the Indian traditional scriptures very much but urged at the same time that the Indians should learn natural sciences and technology of the Western schools.

In the same way, Arya Samaj (1875) stood on the bed-rock of the Vedas and addressed itself first to purging the society in which it had arisen of its rampant evils.[182] The leaders of the Arya Samaj realised, from the very beginning, the vital importance of education in opening the eyes of the people to their true cultural heritage. In order to propagate knowledge among the people the Arya Samaj opened a network of 'Gurukulas' (traditional schools of the Hindus). Efforts were made in these gurukulas to resuscitate the Vedic and Sanskrit studies and assimilate into them modern art and science. It put accent on character building as the very basis of child education. Relief works and social reformation activities

were also part of its mode of education. Gopabandhu Das was impressed by the preaching of this Samaj and often quoted them in his speeches and writings.[183]

The war against social corruptions, the reform movement and the educational policy, which Gopabandhu intended carrying through his Satyavadi School, reflected the above spirit. On the suggestion of Madhusudan Rao, the place Satyavadi in Puri district was chosen as the ideal location for the school. Its scenic beauty and the 'churiana'trees imparting charm and fragrance must have been quite refreshing to the young boys who came to study there. The school was set up in the year 1909, on the day of 'Kumara Purnima' (The full moon day of autumn -- it is a festival day for the Oriyas).

With the donations of many feudatory chiefs and rich people and with the blessings of many important personalities of the day, Satyavadi School started with the upper-primary classes. In two years time it became a High School. Once the initial obstacles were got over, the students grew in number and the school started making its impact felt.

The method of education was based on the Indian tradition of spiritual foundation but was influenced by the Western progressive ideas. It taught the students the importance of discipline, high moral character and simplicity bordering on austerity in their daily life. It held as sacred the relationship between students and teachers. This relationship, the school contemplated, must not only be amicable, it must be as close and deep as that between the members of a single family. It was a residential campus where the teachers were always accessible to the students and were ever eager to help them. Every block in the campus used to have a student monitor and to supervise his work, a teacher lived at the end of each block. Physical training was made compulsory. Social service was also obligatory. Literary discussions were encouraged. In the weekends, the students used to have

elocution, essay and other literary competitions, discussions on history and heritage, recitations and similar activities. The boys were brought up in the midst of true Oriya traditions; traditional Oriya festivals were observed, typical Oriya food was always on the menu, Oriya scriptures were read.[184] Students also used to have picnic-cum-excursions to nearby historical places. Spontaneous and free growth of mind was always kept in view while enforcing discipline. For this purpose, the boarding and school were managed in the most democratic way. Students had a say in every matter. The teachers and students worked in perfect unison even outside the class rooms and their work ranged from gardening to cremation of dead bodies during floods and epidemics.

The teachers working there had come and joined the organisation voluntarily knowing fully well that this was almost a missionary work that entailed much hardship and sacrifice. The remuneration was rather meagre and was meant to cover only their basic requirements. However, a sense of dedication sustained the enthusiasm of these young people. The five close associates of Satyavadi-famous in Orissa as 'Pancha Sakha' (in the line with the Pancha Sakha of Sri Chaitanya in Puri in the 16th century) included Gopabandhu Das, Nilakantha Das, Acharya Harihara Das, Godavaris Misra and Krupasindhu Misra.

Gopabandhu Das who was the founder of the Satyavadi School was born on 9 October 1877 at a village named Suando of Puri district in a Brahmin family.[185] He graduated in Humanities from the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack in 1904 and in 1906 graduated in Law from the Calcutta University. The same year his wife died; his only son had died even earlier. His two daughters were married off early, in keeping with the contemporary tradition. Without any family encumbrances, he was a free man now to dedicate himself completely to the cause of the country and the downtrodden. He became actively associated with the U.U.C. and

was its President in 1919. He toured the outlying tracts, mainly Singhbhum and developed a deep understanding of the difficulties the Oriyas were facing. He inspired them to set up schools and mobilised them to take up their question fearlessly with the government for introducing Oriya in courts and offices. He associated himself keenly with the youth of the country and was for sometime, the Secretary of the 'Young Utkal Association'. He organised centres for literary discussions and physical exercises for the boys.[186] He also encouraged women in their social work and fought for the cause of female education.[187] In 1917, he became a member of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Assembly on persuasions from his friends.[188] Here he brought to the notice of the Government the sufferings of the people particularly during the calamitous floods and droughts. Soon after he joined the National Congress and became its ardent follower[189] In 1920, when the Congress accepted in principle division of province on a linguistic basis and declared non-co-operation as its next step, Gopabandhu attended the Utkal Union Conference session at Chakradharpur and influenced the U.U.C. to accept the Congress principles in addition to its original ones. During the non-co-operation, he was imprisoned from 24 January 1923 to 26 June 1924. In the jail, his famous literary creations like 'Bandira Atmakatha' and 'Kara-Kavita' came out which have become famous both for their sympathetic tone towards the countrymen as for their literary qualities. Many of his innovations in literary style were in fact accepted by the writers of the following generation. After his release from jail, he devoted his time and energy to the Congress and social work. His activities for the amalgamation in the outlying Oriya areas are dealt with elsewhere in this work. Gopabandhu Das was also closely associated with the Servants of India Society and was its vice-president in 1928.[190] He edited newspapers like 'Samaj' and 'Satyavadi' through which he revealed an unmatched ability as a journalist. Gopabandhu

Das was thus a politician, an educationist, journalist, a litterateur, all blended into one but primarily, he was great humanist -the authentic voice of the poor. When he died at the age of only 50 years in 1928, he had already achieved for himself a place amongst the noblest personalities that this country has produced.

Gopabandhu's dream of Satyavadi might have been considered utopian, it was an exercise far ahead of his time -- the work of a free philosopher. In the age of darkness in Orissa, it acted as a beacon of light. A similar experiment was also being implemented by Rabindranath Tagore at Santiniketan, in Bengal.

Once Gopabandhu started translating his plan into action, his close associates also joined in; among them, Nilakantha Das was one of the earliest. He became the chief supervisor and headmaster of the school and took up Gopabandhu's position after the latter's untimely death. Nilakantha was born on 5 August 1884 in SriRamachandrapur of Puri. He had his early schooling in the village. Then, he went over to Puri after obtaining a scholarship. While studying at Puri be met Gopabandhu, who had by then established his fame as a writer. In the late 19th century, when a vocal 'war' was being waged between the two literary magazines, 'Indradhanu'and 'Bijuli' criticising and supporting the poet Radhanath Ray, Gopabandhu a schoolboy then wrote a poem in 'Indradhanu' commenting on Radhanath adversely, and incurred his displeasure. Radhanath Ray who was then the school Inspector, went nearly to the point of driving him out of the school but was dissuaded from doing so. This incident made Gopabandhu a hero overnight and left an impact on the students including Nilakantha.[191] When Nilakantha came to Cuttack for schooling and subsequently studied in the Ravenshaw College he came in closer contact with Gopabandhu and was joined by Acharya Harihar Das who was then doing his intermediate course. Gopabandhu was an undergraduate student. Nilakantha narrates one anecdote:[192]

during a vacation Acharya Harihar took Nilakantha and Ananta Misra (the future campaigner of the Oriya movement) along with him to Gopabandhu's village in Suando. While sitting in a moonlit evening on the bank of the river Bhargabi, Gopabandhu made them promise that none of them would go in for any government job, that they would instead do something about their country and the countrymen. In the District School at Puri Nilakantha got acquainted with Godavaris Misra who was a student there. This acquaintance grew into thick friendship later on. Godavaris hailed from a conservative Brahmin family also from Puri and was born in the year 1886 in a village called Banpur.[193] After preliminary schooling he come to the Puri school where he came in contact with Nilakantha and Gopabandhu. After graduating in Philosophy from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack he did his M.A. in Economics from Calcutta. He came from a very poor family and passed his student days with much privation. It was while in the Ravenshaw College that both Nilakantha and Godavaris met Acharya Harihara Das. These three formed a very close group and centred their activities on Gopabandhu's ideals. They always rebelled against social superstitions and class-barriers and in fact, against some of the Brahmin traditions although they came from conservative Brahmin families. In the process, however, they invited the wrath of the high-caste people of the society.[194] They fought against child marriage, supported female education and sympathised with the downtrodden and the socially ostracised. They were later on joined by the historian Krupasindhu Misra. Apart from being a social reformer, each of them was a scholar, and each possessed a literary gift. Each devoted the best part of his life to fulfilling the dream of Gopabandhu at the Satyavadi School. Apart from these five very eminent personalities, there were other teachers too whose sacrifice and devotion was exemplary. Basudev Mohapatra, Ramachandra Rath, Haladhara Mohapatra, Madhusudan Misra, Arttatrana Das and Dhaneswar

Moharana were among some of the other important teachers, associated with the Satyavadi centre.[195] Basudev Mohapatra was the physical training teacher and also looked after moral education. Nilamani Das was a trained scout teacher. Dhaneswar Moharana taught crafts and in particular, carpentry; and Banchanidhi Das was the music teacher. Ramachandra Rath came from a very poor Brahmin family and pursued his education by working as a coolie. After completing his education he got an appointment in Puri Court as a 'peskar' but gave up that job as it involved bribery and corruption.[196]

He imparted training to the boys in agricultural work. It would appear from the exhaustive list of teachers and their respective subjects apart from the conventional academic courses a number of vocational subjects were included in the curriculum. The curricular and extracurricular courses were as revolutionary in approach as was the concept of holding classes 'under the green wood tree'. The underlying philosophy was that the students were members of the society first and hence must try to understand various aspects of life in society. Little wonder therefore that anyone who had once breathed the air of Satyavadi in his younger days became 'somebody' in the political life of Orissa in later years. An outsider could easily recognise him with the distinctive stamp of Satyavadi. Gopabandhu had also set up one 'Asram' at place called Kadua near Satyavadi where he had put all the scheduled caste boys[197] in charge of Ramachandra Rath. The other teachers of Satyavadi came and taught these boys too. Many of them who passed out of this school settled down quite well in their life.

The Satyavadi School drew attention from all quarters and its credibility as an educational institution soared up in the public eye with the growing reputation of Gopabandhu. People throughout Orissa admired this venture and many sent their sons to this school. Many boys from the outlying Oriya tracts came to

study here too. His fame grew outside Orissa. Surendranath Banerjee, on his Orissa visit in 1912 was full of praise for the school.[198] Many other dignitaries including the Bihar-Orissa Governor Sir Edward Gait and Sir Asutosh Mukherjee called at this institute.[199] In 1921 Gandhi also visited the School.

Gopabandhu and his close associates wanted the school to remain free of government control. Accordingly, it never accepted any grant from official authorities. It took a long time therefore obtaining the necessary recognition from the Calcutta University, which would enable its students to appear for the school final examination. The university was also empowered to provide grants for recognised high school. The school gradually invited apprehensions in the government circles. It appeared very odd to them that a group of highly educated persons who could get any lucrative job, were able to suppress this temptation and instead preferred to be associated with a school, where they had to settle down to a pittance. The refusal of the management of the school to any government help further precipitated their suspicion of them. They apprehended that perhaps the school was a nursery to preach sedition against them or perhaps a centre for disseminating ideas of freedom struggle. They even suspected that the students and teachers were hiding objectionable weapons in the school. They decided therefore to post plain-clothed detectives masquerading as relations of some student inside the hostel, and kept the school under constant surveillance.[200]

The school managed only with donations. U.U.C. also campaigned during its annual session for aid from the public. In U.U.C. session at Puri in 1913 the Kanika chief appealed to the public in general to help this wonderful institution and revealed that till then the feudatory chiefs were the only donors to the school fund.[201] The founding teachers had contemplated that they would teach for three years and then new teachers would take their place; the senior ones would donate one-fifth of their income to this institution.[202] But this plan never

materialised. Fresh batches were shy to come in. Consequently, the old teachers had to endure a tremendous strain.

After nine years of quiet and sustained dedication, disquieting signs showed up at Satyavadi; a clash of personalities became evident. Gopabandhu was obliged to introduce a pattern of administration for the school in 1918 under which the headship was to rotate. Soon after, Nilakantha left for his village and subsequently went to teach Oriya and comparative philology at Calcutta University. Godavaris took over as the headmaster, but he was too soft to enforce strong discipline and the financial matters relating to the school could not be properly managed. Acharya Harihara succeeded him but a simple person that he was, he could not check further deterioration. In 1919, on Gopabandhu's instructions Godavaris went over to Singhbhum to lead the Oriya movement there.[203] Krupasindhu remained in charge of the school. Although new sincere teachers like Lingaraj Misra came in, the circumstances appeared unpropitious for the school---a good deal of vigour seemed to have gone away.

Satyavadi was converted into a 'national school' by Gopabandhu after the call for non-cooperation was given. Nilakantha was requested to go over to Sambalpur to organise another national school there. He published a newspaper called 'Seba' and mobilised the public for the non-cooperation movement. After staying at Sambalpur for a year, Nilakantha was recalled by Gopabandhu to teach at Satyavadi, which had become a national school now.[204] Krupasindhu was asked to take charge of the school at Bahadagoda in Singhbhum and push the non-cooperation agitation there. Acharya Harihara was directed to devote his time for furthering the cause of the non-cooperation movement. Satyavadi was virtually orphaned. The school could not function in the earlier manner and in fact, the students were inspired by Gopabandhu to plunge into the non-cooperation movement. Gandhi's visit to the place in 1921 gave a further

impetus to the spirit of the students at Satyavadi. They now gave up their study. Satyavadi became an active centre of non-cooperation movement rather than a model educational institution. This transformation did not find favour with the Oriya nationalist leaders and the people in general did not want that this fine centre should break down.

"It would force the University to withdraw its affiliation," commented the weekly 'Asa'.[205] It continued, "before changing the mode of the school, it is doubtful if the Committee and its secretary would disregard the public opinion. Satyavadi School had been set up on the donation from the public. People have handed over thousands of rupees. While subscribing to the school, people did not know that, in future this school would sever its relationship with the Government and would change its pattern of education. Is it not desirable therefore that before following the new direction the committee takes into account the wishes of the people?. . . From confidential sources, we have come to know that Babu Gopabandhu is trying to open college classes at Satyavadi School. In these classes, the mode of education would be after the pattern of Gandhi's national school . . ." He was trying to sound his own followers, ex-students at Satyavadi, to get into this college, pointed out 'Asa'.

"Even we got hold of a letter which was written by a Satyavadian to his father. He writes, 'I left study and now we would start working at Satyavadi. I hope you would not mind it. From now on let us part company with each other.'

"This is a typical letter which disregarded parents and guardians. We do not appreciate such a step by the students who eschewed their study, even before the school has actually started functioning as a national school." A year later the same newspaper again reported,[206] "Satyavadi has become a national school since the non-cooperation period, and the number of students has gone down. No one has explained as to what the national education is like,

and how it differs from the government method of education. Since the national education is not clearly spelt out, it has contributed, along with other factors towards decline of the school..."

In 1926, Krupasindhu died and soon after in 1928 Gopabandhu breathed his last. Satyavadi school however continued to function. Now the distinctive mark of school was gone. Even today, it is operating, but just as any other school in the state. Nilakantha mentions that, after 1919, the school was only a ghost of the ideal school, which they had set up so arduously.[207] Nevertheless, in the first ten years of its existence Satyavadi School had wielded influence which was far too deep to be blotted out of memory. In its own way, it contributed a great deal to the cause of nationalism. The teachers of Satyavadi were great crusaders.

As to the decline of Satyavadi from its place of glory, opinions are bound to differ. Conjectures like what would have happened if it had not become a national school and so on would hardly serve any purpose. For, 'Satyavadi' though it was an educational institution -- was also the thought and idea of Gopabandhu metamorphosed into an institution. It was therefore only to be expected that when Gopabandhu after much thought decided to invite the wave of Congress into Orissa, his institution would jump into it heart and soul. It was only sad that others could not come to the rescue of the school and therefore its distinctive mark got obliterated.

References

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2. Ibid.
3. *UD*, 10.1.1903.
4. Two Bachelors, *Oriya Movement*, pp. 24-25.
5. Das, S.N., *Desaprana*, pp. 170-171.
6. Ibid.

7. *UD*, 25.4.1903.
8. Das, S.N., op. cit., p. 186
9. *PUS*, 1903-1915.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Rose, J.W., *Poland, Old and New*, P. 65.
13. Das, N.K., op. cit., p. 52.
14. *UD*, 31.10.1903.
15. *AA*, 28.4.1919.
16. *PUS*, 1903-1915.
17. Two Bachelors, op. cit., p. 329.
18. *PUS*, 1903-1915.
19. Das, S.N., op. cit., p. 199.
20. Two Bachelors , op. cit., p. 239.
21. Das, S.N., op. cit., p. 209.
22. Ibid., p. 199.
23. Ibid., p. 209.
24. Two Bachelors, op. cit., p. 330.
25. There was for instance, a meeting on 9th October 1905 in Chanahatta village organised by the Secretary of the Chanahatta Utkal Union Conference, Lakshmidhar Pattanaik. This was widely attended, by common people and landlords alike. It was decided here that a number of committees should be formed, each one comprising three important members of a village. This would be done to ensure that indigenous articles were used and that every family should pay at least a 'pice'per month as donation. Attention should be drawn towards growing cotton that was to be purchased by M.S. Das'industries. Instances like this were to be found in every village during that time (*UD*, 18.11.1905).
26. Two Bachelors, op. cit., p. 331.
27. *UD*. 13.9.1905.
28. Two Bachelors, op. cit., p. 331.

29. *PUS*, 1903-1915.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Two Bachelors, op. cit., p. 332-333.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. *UD*, 13.1.1912, 20.1.1912, 10.2.1912.
36. *British Parliamentary papers,* 1912.
37. *PUS*, 1903-1915
38. *UD*, 30.3.1912.
39. Ibid.
40. *Star of Utkal*, 20.7.1912.
41. Two Bachelors, op. cit., p. 334.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. *PUS,* 1903-1915.
45. Ibid.
46. Two Bachelors, op. cit., p. 334.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., 22.2.1915.
49. On 18 March 1915, Ananta Misra visited 'Chandigram' a village in Jhargram in Midnapore. His cart driver, an Oriya Khandai initially conversed with him in Bengali. He also found that the village was mostly inhabited by the Oriya Brahmins. He held meetings in 'Chandigram' and in the nearby village of 'Balibedha' (*AA*, 22.3.1915). He encouraged the Oriya teachers of Contai who were scared to identify themselves as Oriyas. He then went to Balasore, Sambalpur, Bhadrak and toured almost all villages in Ganjam (*AA*, 22.4.1915).
50. Two Bachelors, op. cit., p. 335.
51. *AA*, 16.1.1916.
52. Ibid.

53. Two Bachelors, op. cit, p. 335.
54. *AA*, 27.11.1916.
55. Two Bachelors, op. cit., 335-336.
56. *AA*, 18.3.1918.
57. Ibid., 1.4.1918
58. Das, S.N., op. cit., p. 410.
59. *AA*, 8.4.1918.
60. *U.U.C. Presidential Address*, 1918.
61. *UD*, 22.9.1917.
62. Ibid., 18.12.1917.
63. Ibid., 5.10.1919.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Two Bachelors, op. cit. p. 337.
67. *AA*, 28.4.1919.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. *SJ*, 13.12.1919.
71. *AA*, 12.1.1920.
72. *AA*, 5.1.1920.
73. *SJ*, 13.12.1919.
74. *PUS*, 1903-1915.
75. Acharya, C., "Katakara Sammilani"(The Conference at Cuttack), *US*, 1st issue, 2nd part, Vaisakha-1325, pp. 37-44.
76. Ibid.
77. AA, 18.3.1919.
78. Acharya, C., op. cit., pp. 37-44.
79. Ibid.
80. *AA*, 4.1.1915.
81. Even a committee was formed with B.S. Das as its secretary in the 1916 December session of the U.U.C. to decide about the duties concerning 'Oriya Union.' But 'Asa'

pointed out 3 months later (19.3.1917) that though all the respectable 'title-holders'were there as the members of the committee, the committee did not even meet once.

82. An example of such a splinter group was the 'Oriya People's Association' started by Gokulananda Choudhury, a lawyer in Cuttack (*UD*, 24.9.1932).
83. *UD*, 9.3.1912.
84. *AA*, 11.3.1918.
85. Ibid., 18.3.1918.
86. Mahapatra, C., *Odisara Patra Patrika*, p. 17.
87. *UD*, 16.5.1903.
88. Mahapatra, C., op. cit.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. *UD*, 16.5.1903.
93. Ibid., 14.9.1912.
94. Ibid., 30.1.1912.
95. *AA*, 19.6.1916.
96. Samantaray, N., *Odisa Sahityara Itihasa*, p. 615.
97. *UD*, 16.12.1916.
98. Ibid., 20.1.1912.
99. *AA*,12.11.1917.
100. *PA*, 23.12.1916.
101. Ibid., 9.12.1929.
102. *AA*, 22.2.1932.
103. *PA*, 29.12.1930.
104. *UD*, 25.12.1933.
105. *Star of Utkal*, 20.7.1912.
106. Samantaray, N., op. cit., p. 263.
107. Mansingh, M., *History of Oriya Literature*, p. 185.
108. Samantaray, N., op. cit., pp. 300-305.
109. A society formed in Bengal in 19th Century to bring about reformation in Hinduism and in society.

110.Samantaray. N., op. cit., p. 362.
111.Ibid., p. 369.
112.Ibid.
113.Ibid., p. 376.
114.Ibid., p. 379.
115.Ibid., p. 374.
116.*SH*, 6.2.1895.
117.Mansingh, M., op. cit., p. 202.
118.Ibid., p. 197.
119.Ibid., pp. 210-211.
120.See for details, 1) Samantaray, N., op. cit.
2) Mansingh, M., op. cit.
121.About Satyavadi school see the discussion in this chapter under the sub-title of 'Satvavadi School and Nationalism'.
122.Samantaray, N., op. cit., p. 603.
123.Ibid., p. 605.
124.Mishra, G., *Arddha Satabdira Odisa*, p. 148.
125.Mahapatra, J., *Pandit Godavaris Jivan Carita*, p. 31.
126.Mansingh, M., op. cit., pp. 242-243.
127.Ibid.
128.M.S. Das elaborates in his unfinished autobiography the humiliations he suffered at the hands of the fellow non-Oriya students at Cuttack–the heart of Orissa, because according to the Oriya tradition he was putting on dhoti and sporting a pig-tail (Das, N.K., *Madhusudan's Immortal Words*, p. 3).
129.Das, S.N., op. cit., p. 86.
130.*UD*,14.1.1905.
131.Ibid.
132.Das, S.N., op. cit., p. 214.
133.Misra, G., op. cit., pp. 114-115.
134.Das, S N., op. cit., p. 320-321.

135. In Mayurbhanj, an association of the students was organised in the Baripada High School and it functioned quite well for sometime. (*UD*, 16.3.1912).

136. A letter was sent by Mr. B. Das from Glasgow, England, to R.S. Ray, President of the Utkal Sahitya Samaj where he wrote that on behalf of the Oriya students, he was enclosing a postal order of seven shillings to Madhusudan Rao Memorial Fund (*UD*. 23.3.1912).

137. Misra, G., op. cit., pp. 149-.157.

138. Ibid.

139. The Headmaster of Khurda School, for example, did not allow his students to attend the Students' Conference session, and was reported to have deliberately harassed the Oriya students (*AA*, 28.2.1916).

140. The weekly 'Asa' commented ". . . Notwithstanding the limitations of circumstances which cannot be broken through with impunity, we have no doubt in believing that with their earnestness and sincerity Orissa students will achieve much that is desirable. .."(*AA*, 28.2.1916).

141. *AA*, 28.2.1916.

142. Ibid.

143. Das, S.N., op. cit., pp. 406-407.

144. L.N.Sahu, an eminent young worker, after Sarbadhikari's refusal, approached Phakirmohan with the request to preside over the Students'Conference and he agreed. But when he arrived at the place, he was whisked away by M.S. Das to his residence. This faction of the students managed the conference ultimately with an American lady as the President (Das, S.N., op. cit.; pp.406-407).

145. *UD*, 22.3.1919.

146. Das, S.N., op cit., p. 422.

147. *PA*, 11.2.1925.

148. Ibid., 18.2.1925.

149.*SJ.*, 1.10.1927.
150.*SH.*, 1.8.1894.
151.Ibid., 10.1.1894.
152.Ibid., 20.6.1894.
153.Ibid., 23.1.1895.
154.Ibid., 15.3.1895.
155.Reba Roy (niece of the poet Madhusudan Rao) brought out a magazine for women called 'Asa'in the late 19th century. She set up one ideal girls'school at her own residence at Kaligali, Cuttack, where various types of vocational training like sewing, music and cooking were imparted. Text book education for such training was given through both Bengali and Oriya (*UD*, 7.1.1905).
156.Ibid., 27.6.1915.
157.Ibid., 13.7.1912.
158.*AA*, 19.6. 1916.
159.*SH*, 9.2.1918.
160.Ibid., 20.4.1918.
161.*UD*, 18.10.1919.
162.Ibid., 27.5.1919.
163.Ibid., 28.6.1917.
164.Ibid., 10.5.1924.
165.Ibid., 12.7.1924.
166.Swarnalata Dei of Puri was asked to attend the Kanpur Congress in 1925 (*UD*, 31.1.1925).
167.Kuntala Kumari Sabat, the eminent poetess and also a doctor, who stayed in Delhi with her husband organised one 'Bharati Topavana Samgha' at her residence where Oriyas often met and carried on various discussions (*AA*, 3.8.1931).
168.She also regularly contributed encouraging articles and letters to the Oriya newspapers. Meanwhile, Sailabala Das organised in 1928 an 'Orissa Women's Education Reform Conference' which was to encourage female participation in schools and colleges (*UD*, 4.8.1928).

169.Eminent women of the time like Rukmini Dei, Nirmala Nayak, Sarojini Choudhury, Suprabha Kar, Sudhansubala Hazra and Binodini Sadangi participated in the conference. Women like Sarala Dei, Jahnabi Dei, Rasamani Dei and Rama Dei went to attend the 'Prabasi Utkala Sammilani' in 1929 which was organised with the aim of helping the Oriyas at Calcutta (*UD*,12.1.1929).

170.There was a conference of women in Puri on 10 May 1931 which was presided over by Jahnabi Dei. The discussions here centred round the eradication of social superstition, Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931) and female education. Women from all over Orissa including Rama Dei, Kiranbala Sen, Sundarmani Dei, from Cuttack, Jahnabi Dei and Kumudini Dei from Balasore, Chanchalabala Jema, the wife of Jagabandhu Singh of Puri, Nilakantha Das'wife Radhamani Dei, Gauri Dei, Icchamani Dei, Rohini Dei from Satyavadi, Late Krupasindhu Misra's wife Savitri Dei, Kumudalata Dei of Nimapada and Sulkshana Dei from Balabhadrapur came to attend it. (*SJ*, 20.5.1931).

171.Ibid., 10.9.1931.

172.*UD*, 28.6.1917.

173.Ibid., 26.5.1917.

174.*SJ*, 17.4.1920.

175.Ibid.

176.*UD*, 12.2.1927.

177.Mohanty, Gopinath, *Utkalamani*, pp. 30-31.

178.*PA*, 18.2.1925.

179.Das, N., *Nilakantha Granthavali*, p. 59.

180.Ibid., pp. 7-8

181.Andrews and Mukherjee, *Rise and Growth of Congress in India*, pp.713.

182. Ibid.
183. *Satyavadi*, 1st issue, 1915, *Gopabandhu Racanabali* (1st Part) p. 23.
184. Misra, C.S., *Satyavadire Satavarsa*, p. 143.
185. Rath, R.N., *Late Utkalamani Pt Gopabandhu Das*, p. 1.
186. Misra, G., op. cit p.35.
187. *UD*, 12.7.1924.
188. Rath, R.N., op. cit., p. 3.
189. Mohanty, Gopinath, op, cit., pp. 87-88.
190. Rath, R.N., op. cit., p. 19.
191. Das, N., op. cit., pp. 16-17.
192. Ibid., pp. 19-21.
193. Misra, G., op. cit., p. 225.
194. A number of attempts were made to destroy the Satyavadi by setting fire and by spreading scandalous rumours (Satpathy, N., *He Sathi He Sarathi*, p. 87).
195. Mohanty, Gopinath, op. cit., p. 25.
196. Satpathy, N., op. cit., p. 87.
197. Mohanty, Gopinath, op. cit., p. 31.
198. *UD*, 9.1.1912.
199. Misra, G., op. cit., p. 181.
200. Ibid., p. 225.
201. *AA*, 5.1.1914.
202. Misra, G., op. cit., p. 171.
203. Ibid., p. 109.
204. Das, N., op. cit., pp. 87-89.
205. *AA*, 17.1.1921.
206. Ibid., 24.4.1922.
207. Das, N., op. cit., pp. 80-82.

CHAPTER VI

CONGRESS VIS-À-VIS ORIYA NATIONALISM

The reflections on the Satyavadi School in the preceding chapter have pointed out that with Gopabandhu Das the Congress movement in Orissa emerged as a strong force alongside the Oriya agitation. This chapter would look into the background of Congress movement in this region and focus attention on the interrelation between these two in the Orissan context. Indian nationalism was in a way a synthesis of various regional sub-nationalism including that of Orissa, and yet there were occasions when the former was represented through the Indian National Congress, it ran counter to the Oriya struggle, an aspect of study which is considered an integral part of a theme which is taken up presently.

The Early Relationship of Oriya Nationalism with the Congress

M.S. Das in Congress

In 1885 when the Indian National Congress was formed, W.C. Banerjee, the first President of the Congress in his address set as the goal of the Congress, "the eradication by direct, friendly intercourse, of all possible race, creed or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country and the further development and consolidation of these sentiments of national unity that has their origin in Lord Ripon's reign."[1] Such lofty ideas for which the Congress stood created a lot of excitement all over the country. It drew the attention and earned faith from people of various walks of life.

The Oriyas too prepared themselves to share this new experience with the rest of the country. A meeting was organised at Cuttack with M.S.Das in the chair, which discussed and approved the resolutions passed in the first All India Congress Session at Bombay.[2] Various ways and means were explored in

this gathering to disseminate the ideas of the Congress and to translate them into action. M.S. Das kept up his interest in the Congress organisation and influenced the 'Orissa Association' in supporting the moves of Congress. He was chosen by the Association to represent them in the second All India Congress Session which sat in Calcutta in December 1886 under the presidentship of Dadabhai Naroji.[3] M.S. Das accompanied by Gaurisankar Ray, also attended third session of the Congress in Madras in December 1887.[4] His unflinching faith in the principles fostered by the Congress would be amply demonstrated by a speech which M.S. Das delivered at Cuttack on his return from Madras. He said, "The people of Orissa should work for the country's good side by side with their willingness to improve the administrative, cultural and linguistic conditions of Orissa. Narrow racialism and provincialism should be forgotten for the benefit of the whole of India, which constitutes the motherland."[5] It was also decided to spread the message in the remote villages of Orissa. Accordingly, M.S. Das toured the Kendrapara sub-division of Cuttack district and exhorted the people to join the national organisation in their own interest.[6] In October of the same year, the Orissa Association unanimously decided to function as a branch committee of the Indian National Congress.[7] "Thus the Orissa Association after its affiliation with the Congress became the earliest provincial Congress Committee for Orissa and Madhusudan Das came to be its founding father, its pioneer and path finder."[8]

It is interesting to note that though Orissa was part of the Bengal province, it was sending its representatives directly to the Congress. However, when the Bengal Provincial Committee was formed to discuss the regional problems, as it would be difficult for the National Congress to take up all such issues, the Orissa Association decided to be represented in this organisation also. The Orissa group of representatives who attended the session of

the Bengal Provincial Committee in October 1888, included M.S. Das, Jogmohan Ray, Bipin Behari Mitra, Lal Behari Ghosh and Janakinath Bose (father of Subhas Bose).[9] The same year when the fourth National Congress was held in Allahabad, Orissa's delegation comprised Samsen Raut and Munshi Muhammed Akhtar. M.S. Das could not attend because of his illness.[10] It may be mentioned here that we find no account of M.S. Das attending the Congress Session any more until the year 1901. In fact, in 1895 'Utkala Dipika' expressed sorrow at the fact that the coastal Orissa was not sending any representative to the All India Congress for the past few years.[11] On the other hand, there was report from Parlakimedi of Ganjam that Oriya delegates from this region were attending the All India Congress Sessions.[12] 'Utkala Dipika' also lamented that in the Bengal Provincial Committee's sessions Orissa was conspicuous by the absence of its representatives.[13] Thus one notes that after their initial enthusiasm, the people of main Orissa betrayed a sudden lapse of interest in the National Congress. This could be related to the following developments.

In 1895, the Orissa Association got busy over the problem of imposition of Hindi in Sambalpur. Subsequently, M.S. Das went away to Calcutta in 1896 for two years as the member of the Legislative Council during which he remained outside the main stream of Orissa politics as a considerable amount of his time was demanded by the legislative proceedings. As has already been noted, thereafter he proceeded to London where he tried to impress upon the English officials the various problems of the Oriyas.

Although the political strategy of M. S. Das did not become very clear, he appeared convinced that priority to the socio-economic problems of the Oriyas would bring fulfilment to their political ambition. Therefore, it may be assumed that although he attended the earlier sessions of the Congress he did not consider

it worthwhile to spare time for it later on. With the flagging of interest on the part of M.S.Das Orissa Association in which he was playing an active role also got diverted from the Congress organisation and turned, instead, towards the British authorities.[14] In 1901, however, when M.S. Das was in Calcutta for the second term as a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, he attended the Bengal Provincial Committee session held at Midnapore. He even invited the Committee to hold its next session at Cuttack.[15]

The same year the All India Congress was to hold its session in Calcutta in the month of December. After the lapse of a long period, Orissa Association again decided to send its representatives under the leadership of M.S.Das.[16] The delegation included M.S. Das, Janakinath Bose, Haricharan Banerjee, Biswanath Singh, Nimaicharan Mitra, Ramsanker Ray, Yusuf Ahmmad Mulang and Jagan Mohan Lala.[17]

M.S. Das' Parting with the Congress

The All India Congress Session of 1901 was the last that was attended by M.S. Das. Soon after this, he appeared to have severed his connections with the Congress. His adopted daughter Miss S. Das explains M.S.Das'reactions as follows:

"... In 1902, my late father and late Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee had a great discussion about the difficult problem of Orissa, in the Grand Hotel, Calcutta ... My father wanted that the Indian National Congress should take up the question of Orissa, that the Oriya speaking tracts should be amalgamated as a Province. But Surendra Nath was not in favour of taking up provincial question in Congress and so my father parted from the National Congress."[18]

Members from other regions greatly outnumbered the Oriyas in the Congress organisation and after discussing with some of its leaders, he was perhaps led to conclude that the Oriya amalgamation issue which meant loss of areas and population to the adjoining provinces would not be looked upon with sympathy by them.

This feeling was particularly strengthened when in 1903 the Risley circular announced the partition of Bengal and the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking areas. The people of Bengal denounced this step vehemently and in December of the same year the All India Congress Session held in Madras under the presidentship of Lalmohan Ghosh passed resolution which said:

"... This Congress views with deep concern the present policy of the Government of India in breaking up territorial divisions which have been of long standing and are closely united by ethnological, legislative, social and administrative relations, and the Congress deprecates the separation from Bengal of Dacca, Mymensingh, Chittagong Divisions and portions of Chotnagpur Division, and also the separation of the District of Ganjam, and the Agency tracts of Ganjam and Vizagapatam from the Madras Presidency."[19]

The Oriyas did not appreciate such a move by the Congress, which they contended, was applying double standards. If the partition of Bengal was condemned based on nationalist feeling, the same view should have uniformly applied to the unification of Oriya tracts as well. The opposition of separation of Ganjam from Madras was, according to them the result of the influence of anti-Oriya elements within the Congress.

The move of the Congress was thus looked upon in Orissa as positively hostile to their interests. There were consequently two choices open to them, one, to continue in the Congress organisation and to fight for a change in its attitude, and the other, to choose a separate path. M.S.Das thought that to follow the second alternative would be dignified as well as more effective particularly because the Bengal Partition had touched a few sensitive cords inside the Congress organisation.

Even after this stand was taken by M.S.Das, the Orissa Association continued to send representatives to the Congress Session for some more time.[20] But the main strategy seemed to

be one of seeking the redress of the Oriya grievances through the U.U.C. with the blessings of the British Government.[21]

The faith of the Oriyas in the British Government however did not last very long. In 1912 as the new province of Bihar and Orissa came into being, they were bitterly disappointed since their demand for the unification of the Oriya-speaking areas had gone unheeded. In addition to this feeling of frustration, the appearance of leaders like Gandhi on the national scene and Gopabandhu Das on the socio-political arena of Orissa dealt a severe blow to the confidence in the British Government and an anti-government swing appeared a distinct possibility.

Gopabandhu Das and the Influence of Congress

The Indian political picture changed considerably with the emergence of Gandhi on the scene. Up till now, politics both at the national as well as at the regional level possessed a common character ---that of being dominated by the upper class aristocrats, people with rigid ideas who followed only Bryce, Morley, Keith or Mazzini. The First World War however made the ivory castle of 19th century political ideas tumble. The political thought in India now was greatly influenced by the preaching of Gandhi who took the message of Congress to the common man.

Gopabandhu along with his followers had started working together at Satyavadi, which gradually began expanding its sphere of influence and was slowly becoming the confluence where newer streams of social and political philosophies were converging. All the dedicated persons who were associated with the endeavour at Satyavadi held M.S. Das in high esteem for his love for the Oriya cause. However, they kept their ears open to the call of the Congress. Gopabandhu Das, their leader went to attend the Congress session in Lucknow in 1916. "After coming back from Lucknow he shut himself in a room and got immersed into his thoughts for fifteen long days. Then he arose, firm in his decision to join Congress in the face of the Government's temptation that,

if he refrained from doing so, generous grants and assistance would be forthcoming to his school at Satyavadi that was so dear to his heart."[22] Thereafter, Gopabandhu Das worked assiduously for the Congress organisation and influenced his associates to do so. He even used the platform of the U.U.C. to carry on his mission amongst the masses.[23]

He was very sympathetic to the cause of Orissa but to him, the problem of the country – that of freeing her from the British bondage – was of prime importance and he believed that the Oriya cause would be better served by this identification.

However, the older generation, which had fought in the earlier agitations of the Oriyas and were the main props of the U. U.C. were steadfastly clinging to its ideas and had virtually shut itself in the shell of the local problem. These people still believed that the dream of the Oriyas could find fulfilment only by remaining loyal to the British Government. The youth on the other hand, which had no experience of the earlier struggle, did not wish to remain isolated from the cause of the nation.

For a long time, the powerful and enigmatic personality of M.S. Das held its sway over the Oriya political scene. This grand old man had taken upon his shoulders the onus of unifying the outlying Orissa tracts as well as elevating the general standard of the Oriyas to a decent level on all fronts. However, in course of the struggle, he tended to become domineering, and this started having its repercussions.[24] With his increasing age and with the gradual change in the political atmosphere in the Indian scene, he started losing his grip on the organisation –the U.U.C., which at one time was a virtual, one-man show.

The emergence of Gopabandhu Das added considerably to the eclipsing of his personality too. The language of Gopabandhu, which was full of such ideas as non-violence, truth and universal love, caught on. The people in general started assessing the two groups; one, committed to the Oriya problem no doubt, but

divorced from the broader ideas floating in the air and the other, at least on the surface, prepared to accommodate both the ideas.

Significantly, both groups were associated with the U.U.C. and trying to speak from the same platform, obviously because the U.U.C. had come to be recognised as the organisation acceptable to the maximum number of Oriyas.

Now, the ranks of U.U.C. looked like heading for a polarisation between the camps of the Congress nationalists and those of the staunch regionalists committed only to the Orissa problem. The stage was thus set for trial of strength and in this context, the Chakradharpur session of the U.U.C. in 1920 assumed great importance. However, for a truer picture of the course of action in this session, an insight into the political climate in Orissa and in India existing in the period immediately preceding 1920 would be necessary.

In 1919, when the Montague-Chelmsford Reform Act was passed, the Indians were extremely dissatisfied because they had been looking forward to a much greater concession from the British as a reward for their support to the British in the World War. The Muslim faction was also displeased and as a sequel to the Sevres Treaty, the Khalifat Movement began in support of the Turks. Gandhi looked upon this dissatisfaction-draped environment in the country as the most opportune moment to strike. He gave a nationwide call for unity and his non-cooperation principle was presented before the special session of the Congress in September 1920. Subsequently in the Nagpur session, launching of this new weapon against the British was keenly discussed and adopted.

Gopabandhu Das, accompanied by his associates from Orissa had also participated in this session and from there they came straight to Chakradharpur to attend the now memorable meeting.[25]

By that time a provincial Congress Committee had already been set up in Orissa in the beginning of 1920 with the efforts of Gopabandhu. He himself was the president of the committee

and Sayed Ekram Rosul was the vice-president. Bhagirathi Mahapatra, a legal practitioner gave up his profession to take over the secretaryship.[26]

Chakradharpur Session of the U.U.C. 1920 and its Repercussion

Identification of Aims and Ideas with the National Congress

Chakradharpur was an important town in Singhbhum where recently the Oriya movement had gained momentum, and it was for the first time that Singhbhum was witnessing the U.U.C. session in its own place.

This 16th session of the U.U.C. was to begin on 30 December 1920 and continue for three days. Jagabandhu Singh, the president-designate of the session came by the Bombay Mail straight from the Nagpur Congress and reached Chakradharpur on 29th morning. On his arrival, cheers went up in the name of India and Orissa, and he was accorded a great ovation.[27] He was then taken in a car to the place arranged for his stay. Following him came many more delegates from the Nagpur session including Gopabandhu Das himself. From 29th morning until 30th afternoon, delegates and visitors from all over the Oriya-speaking areas started pouring in. Around 200 delegates attended the session. The number of delegates and visitors rose to 3000 on the 1st and 2nd days of the session. The representation from Ganjam in this session was poor compared to the earlier sessions, but in no preceding sessions had come so many representatives from Midnapore, Manbhum, Phuljhar, Padampur and Calcutta.[28]

On the opening day, that is, on 30 December 1920, the session started at about 1 o'clock in the afternoon. It began with the traditional patriotic songs and rendering in praise of the motherland. The Anandpur Rajathakur, Udit Narayan Singhdeo who was the Chairman of the Reception Committee, had sent a telegram the same morning expressing his inability to come. The speech, which he had sent instead, was read out by one eminent young man of Singhbhum, Krushna Chandra Acharya that

impressed everyone. After that, Jagabandhu Singh was nominated as the president of the session and he took the chair. The Subjects Committee consisting of 69 members was formed. Thereafter on the instruction of the president, Gopabandhu Das read out the previous year's report and along with that he read some extracts from the report of the 'Oriya-Preservation-Fund'.[29] The president delivered his speech in which he not only talked about the development of agriculture, industry and female education in the state, but also touched upon the current political scene and the national aspirations. He supported unequivocally the non-cooperation principle initiated by the Congress while laying stress .on the question of amalgamation of the Oriya tracts. In this context, Jagabandhu cited the example of the Bengal patriotism, which did not set at rest until their land was re-united. However, he did not wish the Oriyas to follow the same mode of agitation. He pleaded only for the same degree of sincerity. He also spoke of Ireland where the people had been fighting for independence. He pointed out that in the last session at Puri sympathy was shown towards the Punjab incident. According to him, that indicated an understanding and affection, which could be extended to the all India level. Besides, he argued that since Congress had already adopted the principle of forming the linguistic provinces and had accordingly recognised Orissa as a separate unit, the Oriyas should have no hesitation in coming into the fold of the Congress and trying to present their case. On the second day, December 31st, the first item in the agenda was a proposal of condolence at the sad demise of Lokmanya Tilak.

The second resolution, which was by far the most important, pleaded that the objectives of the U.U.C. should be in consonance with the demand of the hour and as such, must accept the aims and aspirations of All India Congress, in addition to the ones accepted so far. This was proposed by Gopabandhu Das and was seconded by Chandrasekhar Behera.

This proposal received severe criticism from Brajasundar Das who viewed this as a negation and contradiction of the very premises on which the U.U.C. was founded. The policy of non-cooperation was totally unacceptable to him, as this would cause a great disservice to Oriya nationalism. He was immediately supported by many members from Cuttack, Puri, Balasore and Singhbhum, the most notable of whom were Biswanath Kar, Radhakrishna Goswami, Mukunda Prasad Das, Chintamani Acharya, and Sirish Chandra Ghosh. Both groups attempted to influence the delegates through inspired orations. When they could not come to a unanimous decision they decided to adopt voting. Each delegate came near the president's table and cast his vote. This process was time taking and tedious stretching the patience of some members who decided to leave without exercising their vote but this course was adopted to dispel any apprehension. Of the total number of 147 who participated in the voting, 127 supported Gopabandhu's proposal and 16 opposed it; 4 members abstained. Thus the second resolution was passed.

The third resolution proposed by Krushna Chandra Acharya and seconded by Nilakantha Das stated that the All India Congress Sub-Committee's report about forming the provinces on the linguistic basis was fully appreciated by the U.U.C.[30]

After this, followed a long list of resolutions concerning the general problems of Orissa and they were discussed the next day. The U.U.C. session at Chakradharpur perpetuated the breach between the two groups. Now, an accurate and complete analysis of the debacle of the moderates on the platform of Chakradharpur would not be an easy task. The Oriya nationalists who remained glued to their old ideas of keeping U.U.C. apart from the Congress activities were referred to as the 'moderates' for their compromising attitude towards the British Government. The following considerations would perhaps bring to light some of the points, bearing on the 'victory' of the 'extremists'.

Singhbhum, which was far from Cuttack never, had seen in its own region the intense nationalist movement by the moderates who always concentrated their activities in and around Cuttack. On the other hand, Singhbhum in recent past had come more in touch with the Satyavadians. Since 1919, Godavaris Misra had been working in Chakradharpur where he had set up Oriya schools and intensified the Oriya movement. Krupasindhu Misra also came over subsequently to the school at Bahadagoda as its headmaster. Gopabandhu often visited the district to see the progress of the movement. Thus, the people of Singhbhum were more familiar with the personalities who dominated the Chakradharpur session rather than with the moderates who could not establish better contacts beyond sending Ananta Misra to do propaganda work here. The Oriya people of Singhbhum who longed for amalgamation never had any glimpse of M.S.Das[31] or his close associates earlier. This had its impact on the proceedings of Chakradharpur session where the moderates could not muster up enough supporters in contrast with the pro-Congress group who were on their way back from Nagpur and carried with them the fresh memories of Gandhi's clarion call for non-cooperation.

In addition, the trump card held by Gopabandhu's group was the adoption, in principle, by the Congress of the creation of provinces on linguistic basis and the consequent conviction that the U.U.C. could achieve its goal of amalgamation through the Congress organisation. Earlier, Gandhi had given the hope that the freedom would be won within a year. Therefore, the eagerness to be associated with the Congress found much favour. Gopabandhu's unassuming yet firm personality, his capabilities for touching the heart of every individual through oration won him the day. Gopabandhu's image as a leader soared up after the Chakradharpur session and he emerged as the unassailable leader of the Oriya people -- almost the Gandhi of Orissa. The moderates however did not develop any faith in the Congress promises,

thought it most impractical to join the non-cooperation agitation against the British and were unprepared to accept Gopabandhu as the leader in place of M.S. Das.

They started letting their steam through various columns in the newspapers. Some pointed out that they must visualise the impact of non-co-operation on the students and the state.[32] Brajasundar Das was quoted as saying at Chakradharpur that the people who were interested in espousing the cause of the Congress in Orissa could do so by setting up committees in different districts, but U.U.C. should be left alone.[33] To the moderates it looked almost chimerical to aim to realise the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts through non-cooperation.[34]

Gopabandhu countered the arguments in his paper 'Satyavadi' by stating that in sixteen years of its life span, the U.U.C. had never been interested in politics. The feudatory chiefs and the government servants, who attended it, came dressed up for the occasion and went into virtual closed-door discussions. Now, when waves of agitation were rising in India and were finding a response in the hearts of the youth, it was strange that the guardians still maintained that the time had not yet come for the Oriyas to join the National movement.[35]

Although the U.U.C. had formally accepted the Congress ideals at Chakradharpur, the promoters of Congress gradually dissociated themselves from this organisation and with that the U.U.C. no longer remained the sole national symbol of the Oriyas; it appeared to function on a subdued note. It did not even meet annually as before.

Congress Movement in Orissa in the post-Chakradharpur Period

Once the Congress found itself launched in a big way into the political scene through the U.U.C. it did not feel the necessity of having to be tagged with the latter for pursuing its programme and preferred instead, to maintain a distinct identity of its own. One reason for attaining this early maturity could be the

formalisation of the Congress organisation in Orissa through the setting up of the provincial committees in 1920 as has been mentioned before and the work of the dedicated associates of Gopabandhu Das. One other factor which possibly contributed to the buoyancy of the Congress activities was the visit of Gandhi in March 1921 to Orissa when meetings were held in Cuttack, Bhadrakh, Puri, Berhampur and other places and were attended by thousands of people.[36] Gandhi was moved by the scenes in the drought and flood affected areas in Puri and tried to bring in succour for the destitute through his reporting in the journal Navajiban.[37] Wherever he went, Gandhi assured the public that if his programme would be adhered to, freedom could be achieved in just about a year's time.[38] This created tremendous excitement all over the place and the Congress organisation received the necessary boost. The Ahmedabad session of the Indian National Congress in December 1921 thus attracted 127 delegates and enthusiasts from Orissa.[39]

Harekrishna Mahtab, a historian, a prominent leader of Orissa and an ex-Chief Minister, as well as a Cabinet Minister under Nehru, mentions that a group of young men including him, founded a library in Bakhrabad, Cuttack around 1919 and named it 'Bharati Mandira'.[40] Some of the other active members of this group were Bhagirathi Mohapatra, Nityananda Kanungo and Nabakrishna Choudhury. These men were to become, very prominent in the later years. Bhagirathi Mohapatra became the Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee founded by Gopabandhu Das, and sustained his social work till his death only a few years back. Nityananda Kanungo also continued his political life to a ripe old age and served as a minister in Orissa for many years. Nabakrishna Choudhury became a Chief Minister in the post independence period and both he and his wife Malati Choudhury have been very active social workers in the 'Bhoodan Movement' in Orissa. 'Bharati Mandir' became a centre for

progressive political discussions. Mahtab and his associates collected a number of books, subscribed to newspapers and attempted to make the people aware of the all India developments. Mahtab was sent to Calcutta to make his assessment of the Congress activities and he came back full of excitement. The young men made up their mind to plunge deep into the movement and accordingly resolved to give up their university study. The non-cooperation movement in Orissa started in full swing in February 1921 and a number of students joined strikes. In the book, 'Ten Years of Orissa',[41] Mahtab mentions that sixty students boycotted their classes at Cuttack, of whom thirty worked for Congress. Four students studying post-graduate and law in Cuttack joined the movement, six lawyers also joined the non-cooperation. The President of the Chakradharpur session of U.U.C., Jagabandhu Singh sacrificed his law practice. Around this time, Gopabandhu Choudhury resigned from a lucrative government job and joined the movement. Nilakantha Das gave up his teaching job in the Calcutta University and went to Sambalpur to work for the non-cooperation movement. Godavaris Misra converted his schools in Singhbhum into 'National Schools'. He started roving through the length and breadth of Singhbhum district organising meetings, soliciting public support and raising funds. Gopabandhu Das would help him from time to time.[42] In the Midnapore district, Godavaris was requested by Birendra Sasmal, one of the Congress leaders of Bengal, to spread the non-cooperation movement in various regions.[43]

A local newspaper by way of information wrote that by 30 June 1921, Orissa had about 40,000 Congress workers and as many as Rs. 22,000 were raised for the Tilak Swaraj fund.[44] The efforts of the Orissa Congress in furthering the cause of non-cooperation were very much appreciated by others outside Orissa and was reported in various newspapers.[45]

However, a sudden slump in the zeal of the people for the Congress work could be marked when Gandhi and other important leaders were taken in custody and put behind the bars. The ensuing years presented a picture of comparative lull in the Indian political scene, and the provinces remained busy bringing back the status quo that had violently been shaken with the spread of the Congress movement.

In Orissa, the non-cooperation movement had brought to the fore many young leaders like Harekrishna Mahtab and Gopabandhu Choudhury. Gopabandhu Choudhury, the elder brother of Nabakrishna had by then raised his political stature inside the Congress organisation considerably and was wielding appreciable influence both in and outside the party. His father Gokulananda Choudhury was among the pioneers of the U.U.C. and was quite a prominent person in Orissa. Gopabandhu's wife Rama Devi, a niece of M.S.Das, was also a dedicated social worker. The great tradition of committed leadership that had been built up in Orissa by M.S.Das and subsequently by Gopabandhu Das was taken up by Gopabandhu Choudhury. He now turned his attention to the Oriya problem and thought of the necessity of the U.U.C.

The Revival of U.U.C. and Gopabandhu Choudhury

In the preceding two years, the U.U.C. had not met even once and neither the will nor the inspiration to revive it seemed to survive. However, the memory of the U.U.C. lingered on nostalgically in the public mind. The people of Ganjam rejuvenated it partially by arranging a meeting at Berhampur of the Ganjam Oriya District Association on 8 May 1922[46] which was attended among others by Brajasundar Das of Cuttack and Pitabas Patnaik of Puri. They decided here to request the office-bearers of the U.U.C. to convene a special session of U.U.C in Ganjam.[47] On 3 February, 1923, a meeting was held at the 'Asa' office in Berhampur, Ganjam, with S.B. Rath in the chair to consider ways and means of revitalising

the U.U.C. It was emphasised in the meeting that the U.U.C. was never a part of the Congress and it had never endorsed non-cooperation.[48]

It would be worthwhile to examine this statement, polemical though it might appear. In spite of the fact that the moderates had lost to the Congress supporters in the battle of votes, the former were still believed to be wielding a lot of influence in the U.U.C. ranks and the general public seemed to identify the U.U.C. completely with the Oriya problem. This situation perhaps happened owing to the apathy of the Congress leaders towards the U.U.C. It would be pertinent to mention here that, although the Congress leaders made the U.U.C. accept the principles of Congress as its own, they never used the platform of the same to propagate the messages of non-cooperation. That the U.U.C. had not taken up non-cooperation work in a formal manner had been brought to the public notice by pro-Congress newspaper too.[49]

It was at this point that Gopabandhu Choudhury entered the scene of U.U.C. The Berhampur meeting of the U.U.C resolved to hold its session in March 1923. Gopabandhu Choudhury wrote a letter to 'Samaj' about this session and appealed to the Congress members to join the sitting and express their views.[50]

So, the 17th session of the U.U.C. was held in March-April 1923 under the presidentship of Kalpataru Das. The meeting that was held after a lapse of more than two years since the last session at Chakradharpur generated a lot of interest among the Oriyas. The eminent persons who attended it included Gopabandhu Choudhury and his younger brother Nabakrishna Choudhury, Jagabandhu Singh, Bichitrananda Das, Bhubananda Das, Lakshmidhar Mohanty, Godavaris Misra, Krupasindhu Misra and many others.[51] Gopabandhu Das was in jail. This session passed resolutions relating to the use of indigenous cloth, spread of elementary education, establishment of Ayurvedic schools and hospitals and the formation of a national fund.

The permanent body of the U.U.C. met more frequently to discuss ways and means for the execution of its policy and programmes. After this session the permanent body met on 27 January 1924 again at Berhampur.[52] Gopabandhu Choudhury attended it and invited the U.U.C. to hold its next session at Cuttack.[53]

It looked as though the U.U.C. had come back to life with various Congress leaders taking interest in it, and the non-cooperation receding to the background. It was at this time that Gopabandhu Choudhury announced his resignation from the U.U.C.

The announcement surprised everyone and various reasons were attributed to his resignation. 'Utkala Dipika', wrote, ". . . Gopabandhu had left the U.U.C. after attending the meeting of the permanent session and after inviting the annual session to Cuttack. It appears, he was very much dissatisfied with the Government's reply to Bhubananda Das' demand for amalgamation in the Legislative Council. But it was not proper to be frustrated at this stage when so much has already been done."[54]

Gopabandhu Choudhury in his turn, attempted to clarify his stand through a letter to 'Utkala Dipika'.[55] He made it clear that he did not withdraw from the U.U.C. "by getting disappointed with the apathy of the Government towards the Oriya problem." He thought that, "the condition within the U.U.C. at the moment was not congenial to tackle the situation of the country." "It was also doubtful," he believed, "if such an organisation could achieve amalgamation since it was too insignificant a body now and its attitude of appeasement towards the British Government . . . could achieve precious little." "Time had come," he thought, "when it was necessary to take radical steps as have been adopted by the Congress to achieve the goal and in the present form, the U.U.C. becomes a redundant body." He further said in his letter, "...It is not proper to divide the force into two streams---it is but

reasonable that people must remain in and work for only one organisation and that is Congress."

From this it could be assumed that Gopabandhu Choudhury was not happy about the goings-on inside the U.U.C. It may be further conjectured, therefore, that as he assumed prominence in the non-cooperation movement, he thought it was possible to control the activities of the U.U.C. in his own way as it had been done earlier by leaders like M.S. Das and Gopabandhu Das. But despite the large attendance of the Congress members the reins of U.U.C. remained in the hands of the moderates who included Bhubanananda Das and Lakshmidhar Mohanty. This was probably disappointing to Gopabandhu Choudhury since he realised that U.U.C. now would hardly become a vehicle for propagating the Congress ideals.

Against this backdrop, the Government announced in 1924 that the Philip-Duff Enquiry Committee would be coming to Ganjam to study the question of the amalgamation of this region with Orissa. A new body called, 'Provincial Committee' was formed to campaign in Ganjam before the Philip-Duff Committee started its enquiry. In many quarters the view current was that the U.U.C. had lost its traditional shape after the resignation of Gopabandhu Choudhury and had identified itself with the 'Provincial Committee' that came to be treated as only an organ of the Provincial Congress.[56] The leaders of U.U.C. did not want to have any truck with the Congress and far less, to lose their identity inside the all India organisation. The moderates who were the de facto authorities of the U.U.C. now had not forgotten their plight in the Chakradharpur session. With non-cooperation achieving nothing towards the Oriya amalgamation problem, they strongly argued that only the restitution of the U.U.C. to its earlier position of importance in Orissa could attain something tangible. Thus they formed a sub-committee which was named the 'Amalgamation Committee' and it was to meet separately the

Philip-Duff Enquiry Commission.[57] Thus we find the U.U.C. which was virtually lost in 1920 struggled to come back to life. Nevertheless, it soon became clear that things would not be as bright as it used to be for the U.U.C. now that a different wind had started blowing. The Congress in Orissa did not fail to grasp the situation. It arranged a conference of the Provincial Congress Committee at Cuttack in June 1924.[58] Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray, the eminent Congress leader from Bengal, was the President of the Conference who apparently showed his sympathy towards the Oriya problem.[59] Gopabandhu Choudhury, as the chairman of the reception committee made a speech where he emphasised the importance of the Oriya amalgamation issue.[60] It would appear clearly that the Provincial Congress was all for the amalgamation agitation alongside the freedom struggle for India. During this time, therefore, both the Orissa Congress and the U.U.C. presented a similar programme in respect of the Oriya nationalism, though their policies differed.

The Conception of the Orissa Separate Province

The Simon Commission

The Congress-U.U.C. relationship, which was far from cordial anyhow, became still bitter when in 1927 the Government announced the formation of a Commission under John Simon to study the effectiveness of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms Act. This Commission did not include any Indian, which displeased the Congress. In the same year, the All India Congress at Madras decided to boycott the Commission: it also resolved that Sindh, Karnataka, Andhra and Orissa would be constituted into separate administrative units.[61]

Such a resolution enhanced the faith of the Oriya Congress leaders in the National Congress. They were willing to co-operate entirely with the Congress decision of boycotting the Commission. 'Prajatantra', the pro-Congress newspaper in Orissa wrote, ". . . Simon Commission should be boycotted everywhere. This we say

not in the interest of India only, for Orissa as well. Orissa had been always neglected by the Government. The Government should be ignored by Oriyas . . ."[62] The moderates, on the other hand, were, still sceptical about the moves of the Congress. They constituted a Committee known as 'The Orissa Liberal League'to appear before the Simon Commission and present the case of the Oriyas.[63] Brajasundar Das, Gopal Chandra Praharaj, Biswanath Misra and Bhikari Charan Patnaik submitted the memorandum on behalf of the above League. M.S. Das presented his individual memorandum in addition to the other memo to the Commission.[64] The moderates started propagating the view that the Commission instead of being boycotted should be warmly welcomed in the interest of Orissa. 'Asa' denounced this suggestion of the moderates and wrote, ". . . It is surprising that a man of Abhinna Rao's eminence should welcome the Commission and should have distributed the pamphlets in Cuttack asking the people to desist from a strike during the Commission's visit to Orissa."[65] The Commission, however, never came to Orissa; instead, it took evidences from Oriya members of the Bihar-Orissa Legislative Assembly that included the chief of Kanika and Lakshmidhar Mohanty.

The Simon Commission in its report about the need for provincial redistribution pointed out:

"An urgent case for consideration and treatment is that of the Oriya-speaking peoples, most, but not all, of whom are now included in Orissa, because so close a union as now exists between Orissa and Bihar, is a glaring example of the artificial connection of areas which are not naturally related. We were so much impressed with this instance that we arranged, in co-operation with the Indian Central Committee and Bihar and Orissa Provincial Committee, for the appointment of a Sub-Committee to investigate more in detail."[66]

This Sub-Committee with Major Attlee as its Chairman was also known as the Attlee Committee. It included Dr. Suhrawardy from Indian Central Committee, and the chief of Kanika and Lakshmidhar Mohanty from Bihar and Orissa Provincial Committee.[67] The 'Attlee Committee' upon studying the Oriya problem considered that the grievance of the Oriyas was well founded and that their case merited sympathy. It recommended the constitution of a separate Orissa province.

The Nehru Committee (All-Parties Committee) Report

The Indian National Congress, which had boycotted the Simon Commission, formed an All-Parties Conference with Motilal Nehru as its Chairman to study in depth, the provincial redistribution problem. The Committee brought out its report, known as Nehru Committee Report in 1928.[68] This Report observed, "What principles should govern this redistribution? Partly geographical, partly economic and financial but the main considerations must necessarily be the wishes of the people and the linguistic unity of the area concerned." The Report further stated, "an area which desires separation must not live in the hope of money flowing in from outside to enable it to run its administrative machine." With regard to the problem of the Oriyas the report said:

"... We have also received a small booklet giving the case for Utkal, but we regret we have been unable to consider it in the absence of any special memorandum or representation. Our colleague Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose is however satisfied that the Oriya-speaking area should be amalgamated and constituted into a separate province if this is financially possible."[69]

The Report of the Nehru Committee drew a lot of criticism from various quarters in Orissa. The scepticism regarding the financial feasibility expressed in the Report came under fire even from many Congressmen. They were sore that, "the importance given to Karnatak has not been granted to Utkal." Further, "...The people inhabiting Sindh do not speak the same language and yet

the Committee has recommended the separation of Sindh. This must be the result of Hindu-Muslim conflict and the resultant threat of the minority group."[70]

The report, however, made it quite clear that the Congress at the national level was still indifferent to the Oriya problem. This could be because either the Oriya Congress members had failed to represent their case in proper perspective or that the Congress deliberately evaded the issue in the face of rising Hindu-Muslim problem, which forced them to take keener interest in Sindh. The Congress wanted to appease the Muslims of the country by granting them a larger number of Muslim majority provinces in India. Equal response to the Oriya demand for separation at this juncture would have probably devalued their intended concession to the Muslims.

The indifference of the National Congress was evident once more in its session at Deshabandhunagar, Calcutta, on December 30, 1928. It was presided over by Motilal Nehru. The Oriya representatives included Nilakantha Das, Rajakrishna Bose, Niranjan Patnaik and many others. Niranjan Patnaik tried to put forward a resolution concerning the constitution of a separate province for Orissa but he was interrupted and was not allowed to carryon by the President. The members of Orissa took offence also to some of the statements by the President and left the meeting in protest. The next day about 300 delegates from Orissa boycotted the Congress meeting and along with many other supporters marched in the streets voicing their resentment. Pattabhi Sitaramaya who was sent by Motilal Nehru and Gandhi, declared the following day that Nehru was expressing his sincere regret for his behaviour and both Nehru and Gandhi had assured that the Oriya issue would be very sympathetically considered. Thereafter these members rejoined the Congress session.[71]

This incident reflected the attitude of the Congress and in a way contributed to the revival of the popularity of the moderates.

The Civil Disobedience Movement

The role of the moderates and the Congress leaders of Orissa entered a new phase with the call of Gandhi to join the Civil Disobedience movement in 1929. This movement because of the fact that it sought to alleviate the sufferings of the common man caused by heavy taxation on an essential commodity like salt, appeared to possess the potentiality of drawing the people to it. The economy of Orissa, which had dwindled a great deal already, suffered a further setback with the salt monopoly of the British, for coastal Orissa had always depended on the salt business. It was thus expected that the agitation would find favour in this land without any barrier.

However, the movement did not catch on immediately. Complete agreement on extending support to Gandhi's movement was not forthcoming even from within the Congress camp itself. Nilakantha Das for example accepted the Central Legislative Assembly seat. Mahtab, who was the President of Orissa Provincial Congress Committee made an appeal to all Congressmen to fight united. Later on, Nilakantha relinquished his seat and his followers joined the agitation.[72] Gradually the people of Orissa appeared to lend their support mainly due to the propaganda work carried on by the Congress leaders, and the movement started gaining appreciable momentum.[73]

The Congress leaders in Orissa were thus too preoccupied with the task of preparing their fellow men to join the national movement, to devote much time or thought to the Oriya issue. It was left only to the moderates to take up the latter cause and they expressed themselves strongly against the course of action adopted by the Congress which they said would be ruinous for the Oriyas. A periodical entitled 'Satya Samachara', edited by Brajasundar Das and Gopal Chandra Praharaj came out in mid-June 1930 from Cuttack supported such views. "For some time," it wrote, "Orissa remained a tail of Bengal, thereafter an appendage of Bihar and

now in the flood of nationality it is going to float at the tail-end of India." To them, the future of Orissa looked grim and with the cremation of the U.U.C. at Chakradharpur the situation seemed to have gone out of control and now Orissa was on the verge of a precipice. They did not conceal their apprehension that, unless the Oriyas united and achieved their goal before India gained freedom, there could be other intermediary rulers in place of the present ones. In order to muster public support in favour of their argument the attention of the people was sought to be drawn to the indifference and apathy of the 1928 Congress towards the Oriya cause.[74]

The United Orissa Conference

The Civil Disobedience was called off and was followed by the Gandhi Irwin Pact on 4 March 1931. With this, the pressure from the national scene relented and the Oriya leaders of Congress once again turned their attention to the local issue. They now strove to retrieve their position in Orissa. A significant opportunity came handy, which they hoped, could go a long way in achieving amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts. The Karachi Session of the All India Congress on 31 March 1931 resolved that the venue for the following session would be Puri in Orissa.[75] This news generated tremendous excitement both in the Congress organisation as well as among the general public of Orissa because it was now expected that the peculiar problem of the Oriyas would be presented before the all India leaders without much difficulty.

The Congress leaders decided to join hands with the moderates in an effort to work out a combined methodology so that the Oriyas could consolidate their claim and achieve their goal.[76] The moderates had announced the formation of a United Orissa Conference which was open to the Congress workers as well.[77] Both the camps realised now that precious little had been achieved so far as the Oriya amalgamation issue was concerned and this was mainly the result of desultory efforts on the part of the leaders.

On 2-3 May 1931, the United Orissa Conference held its session with Nilakantha Das as the president. A committee was constituted with Nilakantha Das as the president and Gopabandhu Choudhury as the vice-president. Lakshmi Narayan Patnaik and S.B.Rath were the secretaries.[78] Various sub-committees were also formed to look into diverse aspects of amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking areas and the boundaries of Orissa in case it were made a separate province. The meeting criticised the 1931 census in the outlying Oriya-speaking tracts as supplying inaccurate figures. The United Orissa Conference came to be known as the 'All Parties Conference' subsequently.[79] This meeting however did not find favour with all the Congress members and a prominent leader like Mahtab decided to abstain from its session.[80]

The Provincial Congress Committee

The Provincial Congress Committee met soon after in May 1931, with Acharya Harihar Das as the president and Nilakantha Das and Gopabandhu Choudhury as secretaries.[81] It was quite clear that in the Congress fold Mahtab was assuming prominence and he was instrumental in having the Provincial Congress Committee convened immediately following the 'All Parties Conference'. Following his suggestion a committee was formed to work for the separation of Orissa Province.[82]

Nilakantha Das wrote: ". . . The people of Orissa have constituted an All Parties Conference and have made me its President. I am also a Joint Secretary of the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee. I have every faith that people of all parties and belonging to all shades of opinion trust me. I am hereby requesting everyone to unite in solving the boundary problem."[83]

The Provincial Congress and its leaders started working with a good deal of devotion and zeal after that. Godavaris Misra, Lakshminarayan Sahu, Nilakantha Das and Niranjan Patnaik started their campaign in Midnapore. They also spread in the meetings the news about the coming National Congress to be

hosted by Orissa. Their strategy to connect the Oriya issue with the Congress activities seemed to pay dividends in the shape of strengthening the Congress foothold in Orissa. Nilakantha repeatedly underlined the perfect harmony that existed between the scheduled Congress session at Puri and the Oriya movement.[84] Staging an annual session of the All India Congress was a staggering affairs; it meant tremendous organisational work involving colossal amount of money, men and material. Nevertheless, the Orissa leaders wanted to make a success of it and were therefore prepared to face the odds.

The Boundary Commission

It was at this time that the Government of India announced in its resolution No. F. 12-VI-31 of 18 September 1931, the formation of a Boundary Commission to examine the question of setting up a separate administration for Orissa from financial and other aspects and to make recommendations regarding the readjustment of the boundaries in the event of separation. S.P. O'Donnell was appointed the Chairman of the Commission and other members included T.R. Phookun, H.M. Mehta, chief of Parlakimedi, Sachchidananda Sinha and C.V.S. Narasingh Raju Guru. This Commission also came to be known as the O'Donnell Committee or the Orissa Committee.

The timing of the Boundary Commission put a lot of strain on the Congress workers who were already committed through their offer, to their national party on the one hand and morally to their people and province on the other. They thought, the British Government was responsible for their double loyalties. Mahtab wrote, "... There was no need for the Government to formulate the Commission so hastily. It appears strange that when such a lot of struggle is going on regarding the freedom of the country, the British Government is so keen on seeing a separate Orissa Province ... Amalgamation and separation are certainly necessary but not before the country gains freedom."[85]

However, the Oriya nationalists along with a large number of students started campaigning all over Orissa. Even the Congress members as Godavaris Misra and Jadumani Mangaraj could not refrain from the propaganda work they were carrying on in the outlying tracts. The students observed November 15 as the 'All Orissa Separate Province' Day.[86]

The Orissa Congress decided to send Nilakantha to meet the Boundary Commission during the latter's visit to Singhbhum. The Boundary Commission began its tour and reached Cuttack on 11 November 1931 when in the early morning the octogenarian leader M.S. Das was at the railway station to welcome the party. In the course of its tour the Boundary Commission visited Singhbhum also, but by then the relation between Congress and the British had got very much strained and in 1932 the Congress was declared illegal by the Government. Nilakantha Das was instructed to boycott the Commission at Singhbhum.[87]

This was an unfortunate situation for the Congress leaders in Orissa, firstly because they were unable to meet the Commission to press their demand due to their loyalty to the party and secondly, they lost the opportunity to impress upon the national leaders their grievances for Congress was declared illegal and its session scheduled to be held in Orissa was cancelled. Thus, although the situation had appeared very much in their favour things slipped out of hand all of a sudden.

The members of the 'All Parties Conference', on the other hand went ahead with their memoranda and evidences to the Boundary Commission.

The Commission finalised its report in April 1932. It noted that if the province of Orissa was to be created, it should include the Orissa Division, Angul, the Khariar zamindary of the Raipur district and the greater part of the Ganjam district as well as Vizagapatam Agency tracts. Singhbhum, Mindnapore, some areas in the Central Provinces and in Ganjam remained outside the proposed boundary-line of the Commission.

On 2 July 1932, a meeting of the U.U.C. was convened to discuss the report of the Commission.[88] It was also decided in this meeting that the U.U.C. would meet in a general session in Berhampur on 21 August 1932, where Lakshmidhar Mohanty consented to preside.[89] In this session the report of the Boundary Commission was criticised as it excluded some areas from the boundaries of the proposed province of Orissa.

The U.U.C. made its demands clear by pressing for the inclusion of areas like Ichapur, Manjusa, Buddarsingh, Jalantar and Tarala of Ganjam; Singhbhum of Chotanagpur; Phuljhar and other Oriya-speaking tracts of the Raipur district, and areas from Midnapore. The U.U.C also put forth, suggestions through which the new province of Orissa could become financially self-sufficient. A deputation consisting of some members of U.U.C. went to meet the Viceroy in order to apprise him of their demands.[90]

On 16 October 1932, 'Independent Utkala Day' was celebrated all over the Oriya-speaking areas, and in Puri a large congregation gathered on this occasion which was presided over by the chief of Parlakimedi.[91] This gathering resolved to send an appeal to the government for the creation of the separate province.

The Announcement by the Secretary of State and the Leaders' Conference

On 24 December 1932, Sir Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State for India announced in London that Orissa would be constituted into a separate province.

The Oriya nationalists assembled at Cuttack to discuss the announcement on 12 February 1933. This meeting presided over by Bhubanananda Das came to be called as a 'Leaders' Conference' (Netru Sammilani).[92] The Conference expressed its appreciation of the government for the announcement, but suggested also that the new boundary of Orissa must embrace all the Oriya-speaking tracts. The moderates, who dominated this Conference, came under severe criticism for styling themselves

as 'leaders'. Gopabandhu Choudhury abstained from the afternoon session.[93] Nilakantha Das and Godavaris Misra also did not attend the meeting.

These 'leaders' constituted subsequently a 'separate Orissa Province Committee'. The members of the Committee included the chiefs of Parla, Khallikote, Dharakote, Chikiti, Parikud and persons like Lakshmidhar Mohanty, Bichitrananda Das and Srikrishna Mohapatra.[94] It may be observed that the list included those persons who were strong supporters of U.U.C. It looked as though the U.U.C. was again coming to the forefront.

The White Paper

In March 1933, the White Paper was released embodying the deliberation about the constitutional reforms in the three Round Table Conferences. It included the announcement constituting Orissa into a separate province and indicated the boundaries of the said province. The White Paper also notified the separation of Sindh as an independent province.

The publication of the White Paper perpetuated the controversy and disappointment among the Oriyas as the proposed province excluded Vizagapatam Agency and Parlakimedi.[95] In May 1933, the U.U.C. met at Jeypore to discuss the unkind step taken by the government in excluding the above two regions.[96]

Afterwards U.U.C. met frequently to deliberate over the boundaries of Orissa and kept pressing its demand of including all the Oriya-speaking tracts.[97]

The Congress of Orissa had been well out of the scene since long. Indeed, the provincial organisation of the Congress was conspicuous by its distance from the current that was flowing in the state in the wake of the government announcement. The years 1933 and 1934 saw the visits of some of the worst floods[98] and many of the Congress leaders were busy in relief work. Thus, Gopabandhu Choudhury went over to Patna to discuss with Gandhi the measures to be taken in the flood-ravaged areas.[99]

The Congress members were also preoccupied with the campaign for the election of Governor's Council.[100]

Death of M.S. Das

All the rumblings on the Orissa front appeared to be replaced by a tragic and sudden stillness, on 4 February 1934, as the people woke up to hear of the demise of M.S. Das. A man, who had dominated the socio-political scene of Orissa for nearly half a century and was literally the voice of the Oriya people, had passed away in the early hours. For quite some time owing to old age, he had been out of active leadership but his very presence was a source of great inspiration to his followers. He was, in his thought and action singularly conscious of only one fact, that of redeeming the condition of his fellow men. With the death of M.S. Das, indeed a great career came to an end. When he entered the scene in Orissa, it was a land strewn with only despair and ignominy. After fifty years, the situation was retrieved to a tangible degree with the announcement of a separate province and this success owed a great deal to M.S. Das.

The Joint Select Committee and the Separation of Orissa

On 22 November 1934, the Joint Select Committee under the Chairmanship of the Marques of Linlithgow, made their announcement public. The announcement said that certain areas should be added to the proposed new province in addition to those mentioned in the White Paper. The areas were (a) portion of the Jeypore estate, which was recommended by the Boundary Commission of 1932, (b) the Parlakimedi and Jalantra Maliahs, and (c) a small portion of the Parlakimedi estate (including the Parlakimedi town). The Joint Committee also awarded Berhampur to Orissa, "which would form a suitable headquarters for its south-eastern area."[101]

There was no mention of the dominion status for India, which irritated the Congress whose protests continued. However, in Orissa the intensity of this agitation was less marked as the

'concessions' given in respect of the Orissa province had a pacifying effect. The Government of India Act of 1935 announced that from 1 April 1936 the new province would come into existence. His Majesty, Edward VIII sent a message on this occasion which said:

"... The long cherished and natural desire of the Oriya people to be re-united after centuries of dependence upon other administrations is thus fulfilled ..."

Observation

An attempt has been made in this section to reflect on the broad activities of Congress and the U.U.C. on the Orissa scene only in the context of the Oriya regional movement. No account has therefore been taken of the various cleavage groups inside the Orissa Congress like the Swaraj group and the Gandhians. For example, the fact that the Swarajists accepted office in 1923 in the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council while the Gandhians remained outside has been slurred over as being outside the ambit of this theme. The role of each shade of Congress in the separation issue of Orissa is rather intriguing and therefore the role of the Congress as a whole has been analysed. The leaders of the Oriya movement, to begin with, were keen on bringing about socio-economic uplift and as such found no conflict with the policy of the Congress. However, later on, conflicting loyalties forced a division between the two groups. The leaders who were fighting solely for the cause of Orissa, by their mode of working drifted away from the masses.

The Congress leaders, in contrast, were able to carry their ideas to the masses by closer contact. They also appeared to have convinced the public with cogent arguments of the unsuccessful policy of appeasement followed by the moderates. In 1905, for example, although with Risley Circular Sambalpur came to Orissa, the authority in Madras refused to part with the Ganjam district. In 1911, when a separate Bihar and Orissa province was

constituted, it also did not bring in much relief to the Oriyas; the government had again ignored the case for amalgamating the Oriya-speaking areas. The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms Act supported the Oriya cause but nothing tangible was achieved. All these were blamed by the Congress as the indifference of the British Government.

Thus in 1920, the Congress appeared to divest the U. U .C. of dominance of the pro-Oriya leaders. However, as the subsequent course of history showed, such a victory was nearly academic, for the Congress leaders could not or perhaps did not maintain their influence within the U.U.C. The greater loyalty to which they were committed left little room for them to cast a fresh look at the U.C.C. But the orthodox leaders, fighting for the cause of Oriya nationalism even after their defeat at Chakradharpur, refused to shepherd their party into the Congress fold. The role of persons like Bhubanananda Das and Niranjan Patnaik is very significant in that although they were in the ranks of the Congress, their main activities were concentrated in the sphere of Oriya nationalism and needless to say, from the accounts given, they played meaningful roles. In the thirties, the U.C.C. sprang back to life, at least on the surface, when it sensed that the Oriya aspiration would be fulfilled through the administration. Whatever might have been the combination of favourable circumstances, like the creation of a predominantly Muslim province of Sindh and so on, the fact remained that the province came into being and at least a portion of the outlying Oriya tracts were amalgamated before the country gained her freedom --- thus proving the statements of many Congress leaders to the contrary disproving. The reports further showed that if the credit for carving out the new province did not go solely to the provincial leaders, the amalgamation of some of the critical areas like Parlakimedi and Jeypore certainly provided reasons for the U.C.C. leaders to congratulate themselves for their policy of appeasement to the British.

The ideological difference between U.C.C. leaders and the Congress was once again underlined when in 1936, the U U.C. passed a resolution at Puri expressing their loyalty to the Crown, and the Congress promptly denounced it as a "British device to divide and rule."[102]

Bailey wrote in this connection: "Congress hostility towards Oriya Nationalism cost it the whole-hearted support of a section of the Oriya middle classes. Many continued to work within the framework of Congress for independence, but they did so with reservations, and from time to time, when Congress unity was weak and its aims uncertain, they broke away."[103]

Gandhi and the Oriya Nationalism

When tumultuous cheers went up for Gandhi and Gopabandhu in the Chakradharpur session and U.U.C. forced there to accept the principles of Congress, it signalled the formal installation of the Congress in Orissa. Thereafter Orissa responded to the call of non-cooperation of Gandhi.[104] Before one examines how Gandhi himself reacted to the issue of the Oriya agitation, it may be pertinent to look into such questions as when and how the leader of the nation came in contact with Orissa and the Oriyas, how strong was this association and what was the impact of his personality and his work on the people of Orissa.

To begin with, Gandhi emerged on the political scene of India only in 1915. He established his political contacts through the existing Congress organisation. Logically therefore Gandhi's association began with such people (and regions) who were active members of the Congress. Places like Orissa who were only in the backwaters of the Congress activities were still unknown to him. It is said that the first person from Orissa to have come in direct contact with Gandhi, was one Govinda Misra.[105] He had fled Daspalla, a feudatory state in Orissa, and had taken shelter in Gandhi's ashram to escape punishment from the British Government for allegedly having taken a leading role in an uprising

in the state. That apart no other direct contact was established with Orissa. However, Gandhi had by now realised that in order to take the common mass into confidence and to establish his credibility as a national leader he could ill afford to alienate himself from various local problems which faced them in different regions. He carried on, for instance, a successful agitation in Champaran in Bihar on behalf of the cultivators who had suffered for a century under an iniquitous system of forced growing of indigo for bringing gain to the planters. After the Montague-Chelmsford recommendation in 1918 for more regional autonomy and the interest it evoked in various regions, Gandhi was more convinced of the need to get familiar with the regional problems and their intricacies.

One such opportunity came by in 1920. For the people of Orissa, the years 1918 and 1919 were years of great misery as severe draught, flood had visited successively, and now a dreadful famine stared them in the face. Gandhi came to know of it and immediately decided to act. He wrote an article in 'Navajivan' (a Gujarati periodical) underlining the need for urgent and generous help for the famine stricken people of Orissa. Realising that the region of Orissa was unknown to the outside world, he quoted Rabindra Nath Tagore in this write-up to inform the people that 'Utkala'was a famous land and a place of great pilgrimage for the Hindus. He deputed one of his associates, Thakkar Bapa to camp in Orissa and conduct relief work there.[106] Thakkar Bapa kept him posted with his activity in Orissa. In 'Young India' dated 12 May 1920, Gandhi reflected on the political situation in Orissa which according to him left much to be desired and exposed the land to such calamities as the current one apart from causing great disadvantages to the people of the region. He mentioned in this report that he had been apprised of this situation by a man of Orissa.[107] Such reports by Gandhi did succeed in some measure to bring the problems of Orissa to the attention of others and

also helped to generate a feeling of goodwill among the Oriya leaders for him.

Gopabandhu Das established the Provincial Congress Committee at Puri in 1920. The easily comprehensible manner, in which Gopabandhu started spreading the Gandhian principles, soon had its impact; more and more people now came under the sway of these ideals. However Gandhi's non-cooperation did not have smooth sailing in Orissa instantly and invited criticism.[108]

Gandhi had anticipated such oppositions from many quarters and knew that he had to undertake extensive tours of the various regions to explain and convince people with his message. In March 1921, Gandhi visited Orissa with a view to baptising the people into the new creed of non-cooperation. This was his maiden appearance on the soil of Orissa, yet he drew large crowds wherever he went.[109] Apart from his principles of non-cooperation his favourable views on the formation of linguistic provinces were also known[110] and this added to the interest of the Oriya people in Gandhi. Gandhi, during his long tour of Orissa, visited a large number of places and held numerous public and private meetings where he put across his political theory as well as attempted to know and comprehend the grievances of the common people. On his return from the tour of Orissa, Gandhi wrote in 'Young India' (April 1920) in which he painted the picture of devastation that the famine had wrought. He also brought to notice, through this article the sad political situation in Orissa. A book entitled, 'Oriya Movement'was presented to him and he seemed to have agreed in principle, with the view-points expressed here when he argued in favour of a separate province for Orissa.[111] Gandhi's considerate and sympathetic views on the Orissa problem proved beyond doubt his genuine concern for the people of this region. He also made it known that Orissa's feeble voice was getting drowned in the presence of more influential members inside the Congress organisation and hinted that the minority opinions should

not be ignored. Gandhi's commendation for the Orissa leaders -- who had brought the U.U.C. into the ranks of the Congress at the Chakradharpur session and had ushered in non-cooperation movement into Orissa -- helped them win support from various other quarters. The people of Orissa realised that through Gandhi their cause could be projected into the all India scene.[112] The faith in Congress that was now generated, encouraged its leaders in Orissa to launch the non-cooperation movement in a big way here.

Even when the non-cooperation movement did not bring in the promised Swaraj and the people's faith in Orissa in the Congress started wavering, the concern of Gandhi for Orissa and the Oriyas did not diminish. For example, when Gandhi visited Rangoon (Burma) he was presented with a memorandum by the Oriyas residing there.[113] Gandhi justified the faith expressed in him by his remark that ". . . Like the head of King Charles I, the Oriya problem reappears before me and haunts me in my sleep."[114]

On account of this sustained interest which Gandhi displayed, his Civil Disobedience programme in spite of the initial restraint, caught on. He was looked upon by many a section in Orissa as their saviour. Therefore, when the Government announced the formation of the Boundary Commission, Nilakantha Das wired to Gandhi: "We are concerned about the outlying areas that should be included with the political Orissa in case it becomes a separate province. I believe that you would keep in mind this demand of Utkala along with your other important preoccupation."[115] He also sent another wire on similar lines to Jawaharlal.[116]

Gandhi's concern for Orissa was also proved at the Karachi Congress of March 1931 where it was decided that Orissa would be allowed to host the next session of the Congress. Gandhi himself played a decisive role in the choice of Orissa. He was persuaded to lend his voice in Orissa's favour by the women leader, Sarala Devi. She wrote in this context: ". . . On 1 April 1931 at 7.30 a.m. we, all the representatives from Orissa went to

Gandhiji to apprise him of the issue and to receive his advice. Mahatmaji was very pleased to meet so many lady delegates from our province . . . Regarding a separate Utkala he said, "I have already raised the issue in the discussion with the Congress authorities. I shall press for it myself as a representative of Orissa at the Round Table Conference."[117]

Gandhi's repeated stress on the separation of Orissa as a province proves beyond doubt that he believed in the cultural integration of the regional territories. His policy of forming the provinces on the linguistic basis also emphasised the fact. He valued the cultural and linguistic sub-nationalism of the provinces side by side with the Indian territorial nationalism through which India was trying to free herself from the foreign yoke.

Oriya nationalism however presented two aspects: it wanted first of all the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts who lay prostrate under different provincial administrations and secondly it wanted the unified Oriya areas to assume a separate identity.[118] Gandhi seemingly emphasised the separation of the province but did not say anything definite on the amalgamation problem. When Gopabandhu Choudhury met Gandhi in 1931, the latter commented, "Orissa's separation into an independent province was a certainty."[119] Gopabandhu Choudhury then apprised Gandhi about the boundary disputes and suggested to Gandhi to have a boundary commission constituted by the Congress. Gandhi apparently appreciated that and Rajendra Prasad and J.M. Sengupta, two important nationalist leaders of India, seemed to have agreed also.[120] But we know from the records that nothing positive came off in this respect.

Such a stand by Gandhi was never properly perceived by the Oriyas. Iswar Chandra Hota from Singhbhum wrote to Gandhi, "Unless Singhbhum is amalgamated with Orissa I am going to take fast unto death . . ."[121] In Midnapore, both the amalgamation and anti-amalgamation agitators were vying with each other to

obtain the sympathy of Gandhi for their cause.[122] The people of Ganjam were also eager to have Gandhi's opinion regarding the boundary line between Andhra and Orissa.[123]

But Gandhi would not take any rash stance in siding with any one group and therefore remained silent over the amalgamation question of the Oriyas. It should not lead to the conclusion, however, that Gandhi was opposed to the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking areas. He left it to the provinces themselves to decide the boundary line. One obvious reason for this attitude of Gandhi was that a number of leaders in the Congress organisation belonged to interested parties and under these circumstances, the astute politician that Gandhi was; he did not think it proper to take sides.

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31. It had been decided earlier that M.S.Das would preside over the session. Later on, when the date of the session was postponed as its earlier date clashed with the Nagpur session of the All India Congress, M.S. Das expressed his inability to come over.
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33. Ibid.
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43. *AA*, 27.3.1922.
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62. *P.A,* 9.1.1928.
63. Das, S.N., op. cit., p. 527.
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65. *AA*, 1.2.1928.
66. *ISC Report*, vol. I, pp. 68-69.
67. Ibid. vol. II, p. 50.
68. *Report of the Motilal Nehru Committee, 1928.*
69. Ibid.
70. *AA*, 1.2.1928.

71. *UD*. 3.,5.1930.
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73. The movement began with the celebration of 26th January 1930 as the Indian Independence day (*SJ*, 29.1.1930). The Congress leaders began intense propaganda. Ladies including Sarala Devi, Kisorimani Devi and Malati Devi accompanied by Niranjan Patnaik toured South Orissa and raised funds. (*AA*, 7.4.1930). Under Rama Devi's leadership another group of women organised civil disobedience at Balasore (*UD*, 26.4.1930). In Cuttack and Puri the agitation was organised by Gopabandhu Choudhury and Acharya Harihara (*AA*, 14.4.1930). The students warmly responded to the call of the agitation. The lawyers at Cuttack under the leadership of Janakinath Bose boycotted the British clothes (*UD*, 10.5.1930). Bose even relinquished his Rai Bahadur title (*UD*, 11.7.1930). The British Government however took quick action and put almost all the important leaders behind bars by mid-1930 which considerably weakened the agitation for sometime. Towards late 1930 the movement again gathered momentum under younger leaders and continued till March 1931.
74. *SS*, 28.6.1931.
75. *SJ*, 8.4.1931.
76. Ibid.
77. *UD*, 28.3.1931.
78. *SJ*, 6.5.1931.
79. *UD*, 16.5.1931.
80. *PA*, 4.5.1931.
81. *SJ*, 6.5.1931.
82. Ibid.
83. *SJ*, 1.7.1931.
84. Ibid.

85. *PA*, 23.11.1931.
86. *SJ*, 4.11.1931.
87. Das, N., *Nilakantha Granthavali*, p. 103.
88. *UD*, 2.7.1932.
89. *AA*, 22.8.1932; UD, 27.8.1932.
90. *Sahakara*, 13th part, 5th issue, vaisakha-caitra 1339.
91. *UD*, 22.10.1932.
92. Ibid., 18.2.1933.
93. Ibid.
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95. *White Paper, 1933.*
96. *UD*, 27.1.1934.
97. Ibid.
98. *Administrative Reports of Bihar and Orissa, 1933-1934.*
99. *UD*, 24.2.1934.
100. Ibid., 4.8.1934.
101. *Letter from the Seceratary for India to the Lord Chairman of the Joint Select Committee, 1st August 1934.*
102. Bailey, F.G., *Politics and Social Change*, p. 171.
103. Ibid.
104. Choudhury, G., op. cit., p. 1.
105. Mahtab, H.K., *Gandhiji O'Odisa*, p. 4.
106. Ibid., pp. 5-7.
107. Ibid., p. 7.
108. 'Utkala Dipika'wrote "...Satyagraha (agitation) emanated from Mr. Gandhi who is called a 'Mahatama'(a great soul). People call him a 'saint'. He many have traits of a saint, but he cannot be pitched up to such a high pedestal according to the standards of Hindu faith. Mr. Gandhi by his Satyagrah now excited the rude passions in the minds of the mob which soon grew uncontrollable..." (*UD*, 3.5.1219).

109. When he arrived at Cuttack on March 22, 1921, nearly 10,000 men and women came to the station and brought him in an enthusiastic procession to the Swaraj Ashram, the Congress headquarters at Cuttack. (Mahtab, H.K., *Gandhiji O' Odisa*, p. 13). Next day he held a mass meeting at Cuttack which was an instant success. He wanted to meet the cross-section of the society. On 24th, therefore there were private meetings with the Muslim community, with the women representatives and also with students and lawyers (ibid., p. 16). Then he went to Puri to have the first-hand experience of the famine-stricken villages, and then visited Bhadrak and Ganjam. On 31st he left for Kakinada (Andhra) to attend the All India Congress.
110. Gandhi wrote in Navajiban, "people want to make provinces on the linguistic basis, of course public opinion might not be correct always, but if there is no harm done in working according to this opinion, is it not advisable to do so? Because sooner or later, provinces will be made on the basis of the language. And the sooner it is, the better." (*AA*, 7.6.1920).
111. Mahatab, H.K., *Gandhiji O' Odisa.*, pp. 21-22.
112. *PA*, 27.2.1924.
113. Ibid., 1.4.1929.
114. *AA*, 7.1.1929.
115. *SJ*, 18.3.1931.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid., 8.4.1931.
118. These two complimentary aspects of Oriya nationalism, however, became controversial points which are dealt with in the chapter VIII.
119. *SJ*, 22.7.1931.
120. Ibid.
121. *PA*, 27.3.1931.
122. *SJ*, 19.8.1931, 28.10.1931.
123. Choudhury, G., op. cit., p. 12.

CHAPTER VII

TERRA IRREDENTA

After having dealt with the genesis of the Oriya movement and its growth, its inter-relation with the Congress movement, it becomes imperative to look at length into this struggle in the outlying Oriya tracts with a view to illuminating some general features of the movement. Ganjam, Midnapore, Singhbhum and a few estates in the Central Provinces, which comprised these areas, offered distinct case studies, placed as they were with different provinces. Thus, each of them merits independent attention. The dismemberment of the above-mentioned regions appeared totally incongruous and indefensible to the Oriyas and they passionately looked upon them as the terra-irredenta.

Ganjam

The Madras Presidency that was constituted of a large conglomeration of linguistic groups included Oriyas (of Ganjam) and the Telugus. Between the Oriyas and the Telugus, Ganjam was the apple of discord throughout the course of the Oriya nationalist movement. The history of the Oriya nationalist struggle in Ganjam merits a different approach compared to the one that could be applied in the case of Midnapore or Singhbhum. In the latter areas, the tug-of-war seemed to be between the Oriyas and the other linguistic groups who already possessed full-fledged provinces, while in the former it was between two peoples, both attempting to gain a separate territorial identity. In addition, as it turned out, of the three main tracts comprising the 'terra irredenta'of the Oriyas it was only Ganjam, which was included in the new province that came into being in 1936.

History

We have already mentioned that in 1571 the political dismemberment of Ganjam including Vizagapatam and Jeypore

came to pass when she was severed from the mainland by the Kutabsahis of Golconda and placed with the Northern Sircars. In 1687, under the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's order, the control of Ganjam passed into the hands of the Subedar of Deccan. In 1753, the Subedar of Deccan handed over Ganjam to the French.[1] The British who were looking for an opportunity to oust the French naturally did not find such an arrangement to their liking. Consequently, a detachment was sent to the South when the French general was occupied with the siege of Madras. They captured the French headquarters at Musalipatam in 1759; the Subedar of Deccan changed his allegiance and signed a treaty with the British general, Forde. In 1766, the whole of Northern Sircar was ceded to the British at Madras.[2] Since then Ganjam as a part of Northern Sircar came to remain within the Madras Presidency.

The arrangement created untold difficulties for the Oriyas. They found themselves a small minority in a narrow strip of Ganjam and in isolated centres of Vizagapatam and Jeypore in a province, which had already accommodated large number of Tamils, Telugus, Malayalees and Canarese. The geographical location of Oriya-speaking tracts was such that they were virtually unapproachable from the seat of the administration in Madras. Between the government and the Oriyas who formed an insignificant minority, intermediaries inevitably stepped in. It was more because "those who sit in high places, who made it their business to visit southern districts, rarely paid a visit to Ganjam. There was no inducement for the men of other districts to come to him, still less was there any inducement for the Oriya to go south, where his language would be unknown, and where all his ambition would be swamped by an overwhelming competition."[3]

Beginning of the Oriya Movement

However, discomforting the arrangement might have been, no record is available to indicate that the Oriyas in Ganjam were vocal about their grievance in the beginning. They languished

under the intermediary dominance, their language reached almost a point of extinction, their education receded, their economy got shattered and they virtually experienced a cultural obliteration in the province. Records show that only when the language dispute in the mainland took shape, the Oriyas of Ganjam were awakened from their deep slumber and a memorial was submitted to the Government in 1870.[4] This memorial set forth in detail the inconveniences they were facing owing to the use of only the Telugu language in courts and offices. The Government apparently lent a sympathetic ear to their problem and issued an order on 4 March 1872 to the effect that Oriya be accepted as one of the court languages in Ganjam, although later on, the Oriyas complained that this order remained only a dead letter.[5] In the following year, however, the Madras University recognised the independent status of the Oriya language and included it as a subject of study.[6]

The Oriyas in Ganjam appreciated the government attitude and sympathised with the difficulties in the administration in a multi-lingual province. They also realised the inevitability of dominance of other language groups over the minorities. The Ganjam Oriyas therefore suggested to the government in a letter through a newspaper that "the government would do greater service by uniting the Oriyas scattered over three provinces under one single administration."[7] The letter created flutter all over Orissa,[8] for it was the formative period of Oriya nationalism and this indicated the co-operation of the Oriyas in Ganjam.

The Ganjam Oriyas did not rest at that point. They went on sending petitions to the Government.[9] In 1890, the 'Utkal Hittaisini Samaj' came into existence in Parlakimedi with S.S. Rajguru as its president. This association sent a memorial to the Government in the same year elaborating the grievances of the Oriyas. The memorial said, "while we constitute nearly 3/4 of population of the Zilah and include in our number all the Rajas,

the vernacular of the courts and cutcheries is exclusively Telugu." They pointed out that the Oriyas had to learn both Telugu and English languages, while the Telugus just one. Moreover, the Oriyas were excluded virtually from all important appointments in Public Service, which were mostly occupied by the Telugus. This was a great injustice to the poor Oriyas, they said. The case of the 'Province of Cuttack'where both Oriya and Bengali have been accepted as court languages was cited by them as an example. They therefore urged "Uriya be accepted as one of the languages of the courts and cutcheries of the district." They also pointed out that, by the present arrangement they were exposed to serious other inconveniences, which, for example, were enumerated by them as:

"(i) We are unable to communicate in our own vernacular with the ruling officers of the Government in the district. (ii) We are compelled to entrust our business in courts and cutcheries to our Telugu neighbours and to incur expenses which would be altogether avoided where our own language admissible and to expose ourselves to any risk which our trustees may desire to put us into. (iii) We remain in utter ignorance about the Acts, Regulations and so on. (iv) We are obliged to look to our Telugu brethren respecting the laws of the realm for our protection. (v) On receipt of some papers, notices or summons written in Telugu from any public office; we search for someone of our Telugu neighbours to read it to us, and we either pay for this or acknowledge the kindness of the reader. (vi) The Telugus imperfectly represent Uriya and are therefore not competent to correctly represent our case. (vii) If we want to present any paper in office we have to get it written by a Telugu which greatly differs from what we wish to represent."[10]

This was followed by another memorial from the young raja of Parlakimedi to the Governor of Madras on behalf of the Maharajas, Rajas, Zamindars, Tenants, Proprietors, and other

persons and the inhabitants of the Ganjam district and Jeypore to make Oriya the court language in Ganjam district.[11]

The Government of Madras took cognisance of the grievances of the Oriyas in Ganjam and announced on 15 December 1890 that both Oriya as well as Telugu would be regarded as the language of every criminal and civil court within the district of Ganjam, and in future, application should never be made for grant of magisterial powers to persons who were not acquainted with both the languages.[12]

Such a quick response from the Government enthused the Oriyas in Ganjam to step up their activities. In 1899, Gunnia Sastri brought out from Berhampur a fortnightly called 'Ganjam Oriya Hitabadini.'[13] This paper, edited by Gadadhar Vidyabhusan of Manjusa, aimed at spreading Oriya education in Ganjam and also at apprising the government of the interest of the Oriya people and their chiefs in Ganjam. The same press brought out another English paper named 'Ganjam Patriot' in 1900.[14] In Vizagapatam too Oriya nationalist activities started spreading. Vikram Dev Verma, the future chief of Jeypore formed one 'Oriya Society' in Vizagapatam in 1889.[15] He remained its President till 1903 when his son-in-law, Vidyadhar Singhdeo succeeded him. Vikram Dev Verma himself composed many Oriya dramas and took initiative to get them staged in Vizagapatam. In the Asipur village of Vizagapatam, a number of Oriya families formed one 'Sista Karana Samiti.'[16]

The Oriyas in Madras Presidency by and large had imbibed a sense of unity by the beginning of the twentieth century and their hope brightened up when Andrew Fraser suggested the union of Sambalpur with the mainland Orissa.

The Ganjam Oriyas presented a memorial to Curzon in 1902 in which they appealed to the Viceroy to amalgamate the Oriya-speaking tracts and to place them under Bengal.[17]

The memorial seemed to have evoked the sympathy of the Government, for, the Risley letter which followed made a mention of it. The hope of being united with Orissa, which received support through the Risley letter, sparked off tremendous excitement among the Ganjam Oriyas.[18]

Unfortunately, however, things did not move as smoothly as the people had looked forward to. We have already mentioned how the Congress criticised the Risley letter. The Telugus, as was only to be expected, were unanimous in condemning its suggestions. The implications inherent in Ganjam's dissociation from Madras were too obvious to them. They held almost all the important positions in Ganjam in the local bodies, union panchayats, municipalities and District-Boards and they were apprehensive that these privileges would be lost to them. Therefore an artificial agitation was engineered, mostly by unscrupulous agents to thwart the Oriya cause.[19] The Oriyas claimed that these Telugus sent a memorial to the Viceroy opposing the move wherein they coaxed many Oriyas to put their signatures.[20]

The greatest blow however came from the Madras Government who, the Oriyas later complained, were unduly influenced by the Telugus of Ganjam. In his letter to the Government of India, dated 20.6.1904, Sir Murray Hammick, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras under Lord Ampthill, strongly opposed the suggested amalgamation of Ganjam and Vizagapatam Agency with Orissa. He pointed out that the 1901 census misrepresented the facts- Telugus had been recorded as Oriyas and Pallis as Tamils while they were actually Telugus. Apart from that, in the agency tracts of Ganjam he argued, only one-quarter of the total population had Oriya as their mother-tongue while the others spoke Dravidian language among which Khands predominated. He pointed out that Oriya was an Aryan language while Khand belonged to the sub-family of Telugu. Further, in the Vizag Agency, the 1901 census showed that out of 85,000 total population

441,000 spoke the Aryan language, while 408,000 spoke the Dravidian. Therefore, if it went to the Bengal province, then the officer should be proficient in Telugu, Oriya and Khand. Besides, the revenue system and tenancy laws would have to be modified. Under such circumstances, the transfer would not be advisable. Furthermore, he pointed out that the agitation of Ganjam "was not genuine, and that it was imparted from outside." It continued ". . . the real originator of the movement was, it is understood, one Mr. Madhusudan Das, a pleader of Cuttack and a member of Bengal Legislative Council. He appears to have no interest in Ganjam except in so far as being a native Christian, his sympathies are with the Baptist Mission in Ganjam to which the transfer would be convenient as its headquarters are at Cuttack."[21]

Around this time, Andrew Fraser, who as the chief commissioner of the Central Provinces had earlier supported the Oriya amalgamation cause, took over as the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. He had a table-talk with the collector of Ganjam during 1904 after which he appeared to have undergone a volte-face and wrote a letter to the Government of India (No 2719 J-D) dated 12 September 1904, wherein he mentioned that the transfer of Madras Oriyas to Bengal would give rise to immense difficulties in the administration.[22]

In February 1905, during Ampthill's visit as Governor of Madras to Berhampur (in Ganjam), he received an address from the Telugus of the district in reply to which he said that he had strenuously protested against the scheme of transferring Ganjam to Bengal. It is worth noting that on the same occasion the Oriyas were not even allowed the privilege of reading their address, and it was also manoeuvred in such a way that they did not find any place in a local town-hall, ironically built and maintained by an Oriya raja, who was then the foremost champion of the cause of amalgamation.[23]

Shortly after, Lord Ampthill was officiating as Viceroy at Calcutta during the absence of Lord Curzon who was in England on leave. When the question was referred to him for taking the final decision, he summarily rejected the plea of the Oriyas. The resolution of the Government of India (No. 2491) dated 19 July 1905 abandoned the idea of transferring Ganjam and Vizagapatam Agency to Orissa, though the proposed transfer of Sambalpur was approved.[24]

Thereupon, the Oriyas of Ganjam in a memorial to the Viceroy, contested the grounds advanced in the Resolution to set aside the proposed amalgamation and went as far as to suggest the appointment of a non-official commission by the government to probe the matter. They even expressed their willingness to defray the expenses of this commission and promised to abide by the decision of this commission.

A subsequent memorial dated 30 November 1905 to Lord Ampthill, who had by this time reverted to his office as Governor of Madras, stated with a sense of bitterness the position to which the Oriyas were reduced and also reflected on the means adopted to cause such misery, particularly during the past two years. It said:

"...The collector of the district did not pay even the slightest attention to the cries of the Oriyas embodied in their several petitions containing many thousands of signatures for their union with Orissa which are consigned to the waste-paper basket in the collectorate of Chatrapur. The collector did not care to confer with Oriya people on this serious grievance of theirs."[25]

All these pleadings and memorials were of no avail and in 1905 when Sambalpur was merged with Orissa, Ganjam was left out in its pool of misery.

The Ganjam Oriyas, however, did not give up hope and continued their activities. They had earlier formed the 'Ganjam National Conference'. Now they were very enthusiastic about the U.U.C. and extended their full co-operation to the organisation.

They nurtured the belief that this national organisation of the Oriyas would someday disengage them from their artificial connection with an alien culture and would succeed in forming a united homeland for them. Ganjam went on sending the largest group of delegates among all other dismembered tracts, to each annual session of the U.U.C.

The chiefs from various estates of Ganjam also displayed a keen interest in the functioning of the organisation and took charge of responsible positions in U.U.C. right from the beginning. The raja of Dharakota was invited to preside over the second session. The students of Ganjam volunteered to work in the annual sessions.[26] Such unflinching support for the U.U.C. earned the people of Ganjam much appreciation from the Oriya leaders and for the fourth session of 1906, the venue chosen was Ganjam. The chiefs parted with large sums for the spread of education in the main Orissa. In the fifth session in 1908, for example, raja of Badakimedi and Sribatsa Panda donated between them: Rs. 1600 for women's education in Orissa.[27] The U.U.C. in its turn passed resolution in every session for the union of Ganjam with Orissa.

Second Phase of the Movement

In 1911, the Bihar and Orissa Province was constituted but the dismembered Oriya tracts were left untouched. The Oriyas felt that the new arrangement was guided by the single motive of uniting the two Bengals, just as in 1905 the change was brought about for dividing it. They did not relish the principle of being used repeatedly as scapegoats.[28]

There was now a marked difference in the approach of the Ganjam Oriyas to the Oriya movement. They no more maintained a submissive attitude towards the government, their nationalism turned more aggressive after 1912. There were big demonstrations in Ganjam castigating the government and frequent meetings took place, demanding union with Orissa.[29] They presented a memorial to the Government of Lord Hardinge referring to the principles in the Government Despatch and prayed, "that in consonance

with the policy of the Government to preserve the identity of races speaking a particular language by placing them under one administration Your Excellency in Council be graciously pleased to unite the Oriya-speaking tracts of Madras with Orissa by placing them under the Lieutenant-Governor of the new province of Bihar, Chotanagpur and Orissa.[30] This, however, hardly brought them any relief. In the House of Commons when a member MacCallum Scott asked if the Secretary of State would "recommend to the Government of India the advisability of uniting the Oriya-speaking people under one administration and relieving the difficulties under the Madras Government which the Oriyas of Ganjam and Vizagapatam Agency were experiencing, Montague who was then the Under Secretary of State for India replied that the proposed transfer of Ganjam to Orissa might be made at any time if "accumulated evidence be forthcoming for the change."[31]

The statement came as a surprise to the Ganjam Oriyas for they had repeatedly been trying to convince the administration through numerous memorials that had elaborately and adequately dealt with their problems. They took up their demand on a large scale now and the newspapers came handy for this purpose. In September 1913 a weekly paper, 'Asa' took birth in Berhampur, Ganjam, which became the organ of the people of Ganjam in particular, and of the Oriyas in general. On 5 January 1914, it wrote that, in every British District, there is always a non-indigenous element of about ten per cent, but that has never influenced the consideration of the language question by government which as a matter of fact recognised the prevailing language of each District as the official vernacular from the very commencement of the British Administration, but the hapless Oriyas of Ganjam have been treated as poor Cinderellas in the Madras Presidency.

From 1915 onwards, the Oriyas of Ganjam were becoming increasingly aware of the need of spreading education among them.

This could have been a result of Ananta Misra's campaigning programme in the outlying Oriya-speaking tracts. In 1907, a 'Ganjam Students Fund', was set up to fight the backwardness in education of the Ganjam Oriyas.[32] The committee in charge of the 'Fund' criticised the mentality of the chiefs and zamindars in Ganjam who were not taking a liberal attitude towards educating their own subjects. On behalf of the 'Fund' some Oriyas from Aska, like Batakrushna Mohapatra, Raghunath Padhi, Sribatsa Panda, Harihara Panda inserted an appeal in 'Asa' for more donations to their fund.[33] "There was an utter want of facilities for the Oriyas with, regards to their secondary education. Teachers able to speak Telugu were chosen to teach non-vernacular subjects like mathematics. The situation of employment closely followed the state of affairs of education. Out of the 2000 public appointments in Ganjam, only village schoolmastership and hill constabulary belong to the Oriyas."[34] The intermediaries exploited the situation to their advantage and underhand dealings of the administrative set up continued unabated.[35]

The Oriyas in Ganjam believed that the Telugu teachers in the Oriya schools were responsible for shifting the growth of Oriya nationalism among them.[36] The 'Indian Patriot' wrote:

". . . either let the Oriyas be taught by Oriya teacher so that they may rapidly be understood and develop, or the Oriyas must be distinctly told that their language is dead . . . This is what Germany did to Poland. But the slow strangulation of Oriyas, which we see at present is without parallel. We hope that Lord Pentland, to whom appeal has been made in educational matters, will remove for ever this axe at the very root of Oriya advancement."[37]

The Telugu leaders on the other hand remained perpetually opposed to the Oriya development and particularly to their cause of amalgamation. Ironically, the Telugu people had themselves begun an agitation seeking separation from Madras province and

aspired for a province of their own. However, when the Oriyas were fighting precisely for a similar cause, their leaders made no secret of their antipathy. There was a 'Ganjam District Conference' in existence that included both Telugus and Oriyas. The amalgamation question of the Oriyas were to have been resolved in a sitting of the Ganjam District Conference in 1917.[38] But the subject committee of the said Conference did not allow the issue to be discussed, whereupon the Oriya members resigned. 'Utkala Dipika' noted:

"The Conference at last revealed the cat out of the bag. It has been a shocking eye-opener to the Oriyas. From what has happened, none can doubt the policy of our Telugu neighbours. A united Orissa on a linguistic or any basis whatsoever is detrimental to their best interests. A strong neighbour is never welcomed by anybody."[39]

The Oriyas in Ganjam now formed a separate 'Ganjam Oriya District Association' which met frequently.[40] The Association held a public meeting on 28 January 1920 to discuss the Reform Act of 1919. The meeting resolved to convey its gratitude to the Government for the Reform Act but expressed disappointment over the absence of any specific provision in the Act for the proper and adequate representation of the Oriyas in the Legislative Councils of the Provinces where they formed minorities, and over the indefinite postponement of the problem of their administrative integration. They requested the Government to introduce measures for safeguarding the Oriya interests. They also requested the Madras Government to listen to the representatives of the Ganjam Oriya District Association for getting acquainted with their grievances.[41] After a few months the Association met again to work out details of the movement to achieve amalgamation. Representatives to this meeting came from Russelkunda, Aska, Khalikote, Parla, and eminent Oriyas from outside Ganjam like M.S. Das, Gopabandhu Das, Jagabandhu Singh and Bichitrananda

Das also took part in the deliberations.[42] On 8 May 1922, the Association convened a special session, where the prince of Tekkali was the President and S.B. Rath acted as its Secretary. The session was attended, among others, by Brajasundar Das of Cuttack and Pitabas Patnaik of Puri. A resolution was passed, making plans for the union of the Oriya speaking tracts and an appeal was sent out to U.U.C. to hold a special session in Ganjam for this purpose.[43]

On 27 November 1922, the Oriya District Association's representatives including S.B. Rath, Biswanath Das, M.G. Patnaik, L.N. Deo met the Governor of Madras and requested him to recommend the constitution of a separate Orissa province under a Governor. However, they maintained that, as a prelude to this end, the amalgamation of the Oriya tracts should be promptly carried out under any of the administration.[44]

The Philip-Duff Enquiry Committee

On 20 February 1920, Sachidananda Sinha of Bihar moved a resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council to the following effect:

". . . A mixed committee of officials and non-officials be appointed to formulate a scheme for the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts at present administered or controlled by the Governments of Madras, Bengal and the Central Provinces with the existing Orissa division of the province of Bihar and Orissa."[45]

Not only did the resolution receive wide support in the House but Government also took notice of the suggestion and decided to invite the opinions of Provincial Legislative Councils of the concerned provinces. After gathering the information from the State Governments in 1922, the Central Government accepted that there existed a prima facie case for taking further steps in order to ascertain accurately the attitude of the Oriya-speaking peoples residing in the Madras Presidency. They in fact took a

stance opposing the views expressed by the Madras Government in 1922 that there was no genuine desire for amalgamation among the Ganjam Oriyas and recommended instead that local enquiries be made by two officers -- one to be appointed by Government of India and the other, by the Government of Madras. Government of India undertook to meet the expenses of this enquiry. Mr. C.L. Philip, I.C.S., then political Agent, in the Orissa Feudatory States, was nominated by the Government of India, and A.C. Duff, I.C.S., Collector of Bellary, was nominated by the Government of Madras. The terms of reference given to the Philip-Duff Committee were specified in a Resolution of the Government of India (No. F. 669), dated 1 October 1924 and said among other things that they should "make detailed enquiry on the spot regarding the attitude of the Oriya inhabitants of the Madras Presidency towards the question of amalgamation of the tracts inhabited by them with Orissa."[46]

The appointment of the Philip-Duff Enquiry Committee generated excitement all over Orissa. The Oriya leaders in Orissa thought it wise to start some propaganda work in the interior areas to acquaint the illiterate people with the nature of the interview of this enquiry committee. Even a questionnaire containing possible questions from the committee was prepared and the campaigners tried to explain to the people the mode of answering the questions.[47]

A common fund was created, which sought public donations for the purpose of carrying out intense campaigning before the enquiry committee set to work.[48] Eminent Oriya leaders of Sambalpur also sympathised with the cause of the Ganjam Oriyas and exhorted them through 'Utkala Dipika', that they should be in complete agreement with each other in their demand for the amalgamation.[49] Even personal letters started pouring into the Committee.[50] Lakshminarayan Sahu from Cuttack was the, leading campaigner on this occasion and held public meetings throughout

Ganjam.[51] On his initiative, the local leaders organised meetings and explained to the public the implications of the enquiry committee.

The Philip-Duff enquiry began in October 1924 and was completed in December of the same year. The two officers proceeded with their enquiry following the map provided to them by the Government of India indicating the possible Oriya-speaking areas in the Madras Presidency. They contacted the Collectors of the districts, published public notices, held numerous public and private interviews during the course of their enquiry. The various organisations and associations who were recorded to have sent their representations in favour of union were:

a) 'The Amalgamation Sub-Committee'which was an offshoot of the U.U.C.

b) 'The Ganjam Oriya District Association'.

c) 'The Oriya Christian Community of Berhampur'.

d) 'The Utkal Provincial Congress Committee' (it sent its President, Niranjan Patnaik).

e) 'The Utkal Ashram'--- a social organization.

f) 'The Teachers and Students' (through the notes sent by S. Gantayat)

g) 'The Raiyats Association'representing the cultivators and the landowners.

h) A deputation of the 'Oriya Ladies' who ordinarily did not appear in public at all. They pleaded that the very fact of their appearance was an eloquent proof of their desire for amalgamation.

The Committee also met the 'Zamindars' Association' at Berhampur who unanimously favoured the union. 'The Utkal Samaj' of Vizagapatam, presided by Vikram Dev Verma too supported the Oriya Union cause.

The 'Ganjam Defence League', however, went against amalgamation. Similarly, a few Mohammedans of Rasulkonda

were opposed to any change in the status quo. The Telugu 'Komitis' also sent a deputation to register their unwillingness for the union.[52]

The Commission said in 'paragraph 12'of its report that, "... Our enquiry has shown that there is a genuine long-standing and deep-seated desire on the part of the educated Oriya-speaking tracts of Madras for amalgamation of these tracts with Orissa under one administration."[53]

The reaction of the Madras Government however was not favourable to the Oriyas. They adduced the following arguments in support of their stand:[54]

1) There was no intimate relationship between the Oriyas of Ganjam and the Oriyas of Orissa. In manners and customs and even in language, both spoken and written, there are considerable differences.

2) There was no separate or distinct portion of the district, which was peopled entirely by Oriyas. Even in parts of the district where as many as 75% spoke Oriya, Oriya-speaking villages were intermingled with others in which only Telugu was spoken.

3) The statistics of language were misleading. Many Telugus in Oriya areas spoke Oriya but they should not be classified as Oriyas.

4) The aboriginal tribes in the Agency tracts of the district did not have any linguistic or ethnic affinities with the Oriya population.

5) The mass of the Oriya population was not sufficiently advanced to see where its interest lay.

The Madras Government also pointed out that the case of Vizagapatam merited study, separate from that of Ganjam.

In view of the above opposition by the Government of Madras the Central Government pointed out that those in the Vizagapatam district might be left out of consideration, but the possible transfer of ten specified taluks of the Ganjam district should be further

examined by the Government of Madras, and the wishes of the Telugu inhabitants in that district should also be ascertained.[55] In 1926, the Government of Madras opposed the move again on financial grounds.

The Philip-Duff Committee's report had kindled hope in the Oriya hearts, but when no tangible result was achieved, their expectation started ebbing out yielding place to despair and apprehension.

Disappointment with the Congress Attitude

Meanwhile, the Congress had bean sounded about the problem of the border dispute between the Andhras and the Oriyas. In 1922, the Congress appointed a border commission under Dr. Munje to probe the matter and demarcate the line between the Telugu-speaking and the Oriya-speaking regions. The Commission, however, failed to proceed in its enquiry as the Telugus refused to accept it.[56] In the Kokonada session of the All India Congress, the question came up for discussion again and the Congress appointed another commission under C. Rajagopalachari. The Chairman of the Commission was requested by the Congress to take two members from each of the communities, who were parties to the dispute in his commission. It was also pointed out that the decision of the above commission would be accepted as final.[57] Orissa sent Niranjan Patnaik and Nilkantha Das into the commission, while Andhra was represented by Pattabhi Sitaramaya and Venkat Sitanarayan.[58] The setting up of the commission encouraged both sides to step up the propaganda activities in the concerned areas. The Oriyas even thought of requesting Ananta Misra to undertake campaigning there.[59] But all the enthusiasm evaporated when C. Rajagopalachari resigned from the commission for some unaccountable reason. The new incumbent was Rajendra Prasad, but unfortunately no headway was made by this commission and with that, the Congress responsibility in this area seemed to have

ended.[60] The Ganjam Oriyas were angry at the Congress apathy to the problem.[61]

Movement in the Thirties

With the beginning of the thirties, the situation indicated a change in favour of the Oriyas in Ganjam. The Round Table Conference was held in London from 12 November 1930 to 19 January 1931. It was here when the question of separation of Orissa came up, that the chief of Parlakimedi, who had gone to fight the case of Oriyas, presented his memorandum. The memorandum entitled 'The Oriyas, their need, and reasons for a separate province' dealt very elaborately with the Oriya problem.[62] It said:

"It concerns a population of more than 9½ (nine and half) millions, scattered in four provinces-Bihar and Orissa, the Central Provinces, Bengal and Madras --- occupying 881 thousand square miles of country in India . . . To remedy the evils arising out of such a dismembered condition, the Oriyas have all along been expressing their desire to remain united."

The Parlakimedi chief earned great distinction in London as well as in Orissa for his forceful presentation of the whole case. About this time, Vikram Dev Verma was made the chief of Jeypore estate. This was looked upon as a propitious turn of events for the Oriyas since he had all along been a strong supporter of the Oriya union unlike his predecessor who had given the impression of disapproving the move.[63] In order to bolster the Oriya agitation, the Orissa All-Parties Conference sent Umacharan Patnaik and Lingaraj Panigrahi to Ganjam.[64]

The situation became still more favourable when the Government of India announced the formation of the Boundary Commission which included the chief of Parlakimedi as one of its members.

The Commission invited personal representations and memorials from private and public organisations. From the Oriya tract in Madras, on 18 December 1931, the Tekkali chief gave

evidence before the Committee supporting the cause of amalgamation. He was followed by the Khallikote chief and S.N. Rajguru. The Oriyas of Parlakimedi were represented by Dewan Anantaram Rath and Dayanidhi Pattanaik.[65] The Boundary Commission made a significant change in the mode of their enquiry from that of the Philip-Duff Commission in that they also invited representations from the non-Oriya elements that were against the Oriya amalgamation movement. In Ganjam, the strongest memorandum opposing the Oriya claim of uniting Ganjam came from the 'Ganjam Defence League', which had also expressed its opposition during the Philip-Duff enquiry.[66] In its memorandum it repudiated any old connection between Ganjam and Orissa. It also explained that the Oriya movement in Ganjam was not genuine; it was of recent origin, which got impetus from the wrong census statistics published in 1901. It pointed out that the Ganjam Oriyas had been receiving special favours from the Government and said:

"The fact that Oriya language was recognised by the University of Madras as long ago as 1873, while the University of Calcutta ignored it until 1903, shows the interest taken by the Madras authorities in the progress of Oriyas. In 1890, there were only two Oriya officials, the, Oriya Tahisildar and the Khond Interpreter; now, nearly half of the office staff is manned by Oriyas. 3 of the 4 elected members from the district in the provincial Legislative Council are Oriyas. By transfer, the district will lose special concessions granted to it."

The Boundary Commission, with regard to the Oriya tracts in Madras recommended the union. This pronouncement naturally incurred the displeasure of the anti-Oriya elements in Ganjam. They held a meeting at the 'Bhasa Bibarddhini' hall in Berhampur on 5 May 1932, where they explicitly expressed their unwillingness to be united with Orissa.[67]

In contrast, the Oriyas in Ganjam were elated at the Commission's recommendations. Numerous meetings were held where they expressed their gratefulness to the Commission.[68]

The exaltation in the Oriya camp was however short-lived, because the White Paper announced the exclusion of Jeypore and Parlakimedi from the proposed province of Orissa. The decision was unacceptable to the Oriyas of Ganjam. The apprehension of the Central Government regarding the financial solvency in case of Jeypore's inclusion in Orissa came under fire and it was summarily repudiated as unfounded. Similarly, holding the communication difficulties as a factor against the transfer was dismissed by the Oriyas as trivial which they thought could be easily removed if the Government so wished.[69]

The Muslim community in Jeypore contended that Oriyas constituted 96% of the population there and expressed themselves emphatically in favour of the amalgamation with Orissa.[70] The 'New Orissa' decried the injustice done to Parlakimedi,[71] and the U.U.C. in a special meeting made it clear that a separate province without the inclusion of these areas would be most undesirable one. They suggested that the Parlakimedi chief should again prepare a memorandum and present it before the Government.[72] Even the 'Madras Mail' a newspaper in Madras supported the union of Parlakimedi with Orissa.[73] Around this time, when the appointment of Joint-Select Committes was known, the Ganjam Oriyas thought of sending their representation to this Committee. A group of representatives including the chiefs of Parlakimedi and Khallikote, Bhubanananda Das, K.S. Naidu, and Sri Gantayat went to London. The Telugus had also sent their representatives. However, since it was decided that the above Committee would not hear evidence from the representatives of either Orissa or Andhra, the respective memorials were handed over to the Secretary of State, Mr. Hoare.[74]

The Joint-Select Committee conceded to the Oriya demand of amalgamation of Parlakimedi and Jeypore estates with Orissa. It however divided the Parlakimedi estate and transferred to Orissa the Parlakimedi town and those portions, which were not predominantly Telugu, thereby including only 30% of population.

Conclusion

The story of Ganjam's 'irredentist struggle' came to a happy end with the creation of the new province of Orissa in 1936 that included in its fold some of the dismembered Oriya tracts of Madras. A closer examination reveals that it was no easy task for these people to extricate themselves from the state of humiliation they were smarting under. They fought on multiple fronts and achieved what they did stage by stage.

One formidable force they had to encounter was in the existence of a strong neighbour. In their fight against such a neighbour, the Oriya leaders initially failed to make any impact as theirs was the minority group and the opposition was always in the bandwagon. The intermediaries in fact rode rough shod over the genuine desire of the people blatantly disregarding official orders that remained essentially inoperative. The only hope of keeping alive the Oriya language was through the 'Mativamsa Naiks'(the traditional teachers for elementary education) of Orissa in rural areas.[75] Fortunately, however, the dominance by the other group did not dry up the undercurrent of distinctiveness of the Oriya culture, that smoothly flowed below the surface. The Telugus were mostly Saivities while the Oriyas of the region included largely Vaisnavites. Typical Oriya religious festivals were not included in the Telugu festival calendar. In the spheres of social habits of food and drink, in dress, in marriage customs the distinctions were maintained.[76] Further, the advantage that the Oriyas in this tract gained over the Oriya irredentists of other provinces was that the Telugus were also aspiring for a separate province for themselves on the basis of their culture and language

which were distinct from that of the Tamils. Although there was a world of difference between the status of the two races --- the Telugus remained a single unit under one administration while the Oriyas were scattered over four provinces ---the principles involved in both cases were essentially the same. Therefore, even though on the question of parting with Ganjam territory, the Telugu leaders displayed a natural reluctance, they could not oppose the spirit of the Oriya struggle on many occasions.

Another important front for the Oriyas to tackle was that of the government. It had all along proved a difficult nut to crack, as the provincial government was strongly opposed to the amalgamation of Ganajm to Orissa until late. Their argument being they had always responded favourably to the Oriya demands- for example, in passing resolution for introducing their language in offices, courts, schools and even in the University curriculum; in giving official directives for appointing the Oriyas into many local offices and taking them into Provincial Legislative Councils. It was impossible to deny these claims but the Oriyas did not succeed in letting the government realise that their measures, however sympathetic they might have appeared, remained unimplemented as they never percolated through the papers down to the people and if they ever did on isolated occasions, were too insignificant to redress their grievances. However, with persistent agitation by the common people as well as with dedicated efforts by a number of their leaders such as the chiefs of Parlakimedi and Khallikote, the attitude of the Government changed.

Another formidable force they had to face was within their own fold. It was the dissension of some of the Oriya zamindars in Madras province, who were scared that the Oriya nationalist struggle would bring in utter confusion into their estates that comprised both Oriya as well Telugu subjects. Jeypore estate's opposition to amalgamation before the succcssion of Vikram Dev Verma in 1931 was for instance used as a lever by the opposing

camp that were fighting tooth and nail to prevent this transfer. However, gradually the air of suspicion was cleared when these zamindars made a more realistic assessment of the situation. In addition, ironically many of them in fact later turned out to be the crowning leaders of the Oriya movement not only in Ganjam but in main Orissa too.

The story of Ganjam's struggle for reunion displayed distinct characteristics of its own. What is also significant is that in varied ways the Oriya movement as a whole owed a lot to the Ganjam Oriyas, in fact on many a juncture the leaders from this outlying tract helped the movement chart a direction for its own.

They were also definite about their goal from the beginning of their movement. As they were trapped in the Madras Presidency, for them the amalgamation and separation were the same from the beginning. They were also not physically affected by the partition and repartition of Bengal. In addition, Ganjam Oriyas were led in their struggle not by any enlightened middle class gentlemen but by their local chiefs for whom they had traditional respect.

These local rulers including the chiefs of Parlakimedi, Jeypore, and Khallikote, by virtue of their status, commanded the popular support in their organisation of the movement. These leaders had also the financial means to keep the movement going. Thus, they were more persistent and were able to remain independent in their nationalist activities. They did not have to wait for the leadership of any enlightened intellectual as was the case in the main Orissa. Needless to say that, when the Oriya nationalism suffered a setback in the hands of the Congress these chiefs identified themselves with the moderates.

The Parla chief, Gajapati Krishna Chandra Dev, put up the cause of the Oriyas as we have noted in the first Round Table Conference. Subsequently, he not only pressed the Oriya demands in England, he even took Bhubanananda Das along in order to

render efficient assistance.[77] It was no less a personal sacrifice on the part of the Parlakimedi chief when he volunteered for union with Orissa at the cost of reducing the size of the estate and revenue in as much as a large chunk of his estate stayed back in Madras. Little wonder therefore that the Oriyas showed their gratitude to this great nationalist by accepting him as their first Prime Minister when Orissa was created as a separate province.

Midnapore

Midnapore, looked upon as an important 'terra irredenta' by the Oriyas, constituted a major centre of controversy during the movement for amalgamation/separate province. The southern parts of this region had changed hands a number of times during various periods of history and as such prompted the people of both Bengal and Orissa to lay claims on this region.

The Bengali Influence

The East India Company received the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa (Midnapore) in the year 1765. When the British occupied Orissa proper in 1803, Midnapore continued to remain within the Bengal Presidency. But by the regulations of 1829, the district of Midnapore was incorporated into Orissa.[78] Subsequently, however, the Bengal Government notification of 25 January 1854 which was issued with the concurrence of the Government of India announced that Midnapore was to be included in the Burdwan division of Bengal and the Cuttack division (Orissa) would consist of only Cuttack, Puri and Balasore.[79]

The British Government's regulation of 1793 introduced Bengali language in the courts and public offices in Orissa (Midnapore).[80] Earlier, under the Muslim and the Mughal rule, Oriya was used as an official, language along with Persian in Midnapore.[81] In 1836, Hijlee was attached to Midnapore and Bengali was introduced there in place of Oriya.[82] Thus in the whole of Midnapore the language of instruction changed from Oriya to Bengali. It is interesting to know in this connection that Jaleswar

area (presently in Balasore district of Orissa) remained under the influence of Bengali language from 1793 to 1870 but after 1870 when the area was placed back with Orissa, Oriya language flourished here once again.

The Oriya language was destined to degenerate after it had lost the official patronage. Simultaneously the process of Bengalisation continued with the systematic help of enthusiastic officials as well as educationists.[83] Facilities for teaching Oriya in the secondary as well as in the primary level disappeared. On the other hand, proficiency in the Bengali language promised a new and prosperous career to the Oriyas in Midnapore. As these people got educated through Bengali, they developed a complex against their own language and culture. The summary contempt with which the Oriyas were being held forced the half-educated Oriyas to conceal their origins and many of them even started taking up Bengali surnames in an attempt to come into the mainstream of life in Bengal.[84] Rajendralal Mitra wrote:

"Some twenty years ago when the district of Midnapore was transferred from the commissionership of Cuttack to that of Burdwan, the language of the courts and of the people was Oriya. The new commissionership for the sake of uniformity in all the districts or some other cause suppressed Oriya, and introduced Bengali language and the whole of Midnapore and Bankura have now become Bengali-speaking districts. People of these places often feel offended if they are called Oriyas . . ."[85]

The steady Bengalisation of the area is well reflected in the census figures. In 1891, the number of persons returned as Oriyas were 572,798 and in 1901 the number slumped to 270,495, by 1911, the figure shown was only 111,801.[86] Even after making allowances for the personal prejudices of the enumerators for census figures one cannot account for the astounding fall in the number without the support of the hypothesis that the Oriyas, largely, were reluctant to reveal their identity.

Interestingly however, although the bulk of the Oriya population was eroded as far as the census figures were concerned the social and religious customs, ethnologically peculiar to them, lived on according to many reports and memoranda.[87] Many surnames survived and even in their distorted form were different from their counterparts in Bengal.[88] Marriage, death and birth rituals practised by these people still bore a distinctive stamp. The Oriya year called the 'Amlisan' and the first day of the Oriya year called 'Sunia' were also followed.[89] Even the law of inheritance, followed by them (Mitakshara) survived whereas the Bengalis followed a different law (Dayabhag).[90] All these indicated that people still remained rooted to their ethnic origin in their private life although outside they appeared to have drifted away.

Beginning of the Oriya Movement

A casual glance through the history of the Oriya nationalist movement in this tract would reveal that the agitation for amalgamation never really took off the ground until after the Bihar-Orissa Province was carved out in 1912. One reason for this inaction could be that till this time, Midnapore continued to be a part of the Bengal Province as was the Orissa division itself, and therefore, a sense of urgency in initiating an agitation, as was evident in the outlying tracts of Madras or Central Provinces, was characteristically absent in this region.

Even the agitation in the main Orissa in the seventies of the 19th century and its triumph over attempts of enthusiasts to prove that Oriya was a dialect of Bengali apparently did not reach the people of Midnapore. When the courts and offices completely abolished the use of Oriya language, the people must have been greatly inconvenienced, but their demur was not audible. By 1903, as Grierson reports, "the written characters are changed. Sometimes the Oriya character is frankly abandoned and the language is written in Bengali character . . . This habit is carried to such an extent that Oriya classics such as the Bhagavata

transliterated in Bengali are sometimes used in the rural areas of the district . . ."[91] People seemed to have reconciled themselves to their lot and were unsuccessfully trying to seek fulfilment of their aspirations through borrowed plumes rather than giving expression to their rightful demands.

The governmental steps around this period hardly touched upon the necessity of amalgamating the tracts of Midnapore with the Orissa division. Commissioner Cook suggested in 1895 the inclusion of Sambalpur and Ganjam with Orissa but did not mention anything about Midnapore though his report was prepared on the basis of the census figures of 1891, which put the number of the Oriyas in Midnapore as 572,798. This was perhaps because Midnapore was part of the Bengal province as was Orissa. Another important government document following the Cook's proposal was that of the Risley Circular of 1903 which also did not commit anything about Midnapore. One can, however, justify the reticence on the matter on the ground that the partition of Bengal, as the authorities knew, would be a sufficiently bitter pill for its people to swallow and therefore refrained from making any other observation that would wound their feeling still further. The Royal Commission of Decentralization in 1907 interviewed M.S. Das but the issue of Midnapore did not figure even there.[92] Finally when the Orissa division was brought out of Bengal and was tacked on to Bihar, no efforts were made to raise the question of Midnapore --- of course the official Orissa population had dwindled to 1, 81, 801 by then.

When however the Utkal Union Conference was formed and held its first session at Cuttack in the December of 1903, ten delegates from Midnapore attended the Conference along with 371 from other outlying Oriya tracts.[93] This session of the U.U.C. expressed satisfaction at the inclusion of Sambalpur but never mentioned about Midnapore's difficulties. During the following

year, some 381 branch associations of the U.U.C. were opened in various areas; Midnapore operated two and Calcutta four of them.[94] During the fourth session of the U.U.C. at Berhampur in 1906, only an interesting essay was sent by the 'Kharagpur Utkal Samaj' in the Midnapore district.[95] However, neither the contents of this essay nor the activities of the association did ever come to prominence or published.

When the Orissa division was taken out of Bengal and the new province of Bihar and Orissa was created, it prompted the U.U.C. to make demands for the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts in its eighth session of 1912. This demand now featured in most of the following sessions although the case for Midnapore does not appear to have come up for discussion until the twelfth session in 1916 at Balasore. The U.U.C. now urged the Government to annex Midnapore's Oriya-speaking tracts to Orissa and constitute a separate administration.[96] Until this time neither the leaders of main Orissa nor of the Midnapore tracts presented the grievances of Oriyas before the general public and the Government. On the contrary, newspapers in Bengali started maligning the Oriyas of the locality. A news-item from 'Nihar' (published from Contai in Midnapore) was excerpted in 'Utkala Dipika' which said: ". . . An Oriya Brahmin came for alms and turned out to be a thief. In fact, many such Oriya Brahmins are engaging themselves in thievery in the locality . . ."[97]

It appears from all reports, as was also the view of 'Utkala Dipika' that a genuine demand for the inclusion of Midnapore in Orissa was not made till the time Montague visited this country in 1917.[98] Under the leadership of M.S. Das a few Oriyas from the mainland made attempts to impress upon the authorities their demand of the Oriya tracts in Midnapore. In a memorial signed by Madhusudan Das, Gopabandhu Das and five others on behalf of the U.U.C., it was urged that an amalgamation of the Oriya tracts should be made.[99] The memorial said:

"The areas proposed to be transferred from the Midnapore district lie in the south of the district which border on the Balasore District in Orissa. The Oriya-speaking people number 270,000 and are mainly confined to the southern part of the District in thanas Dantan, Gopiballavpur, Egra, Ramnagar, Contai, Pattaspur, Jhargaon and Narayangarh."

In pursuance of the Montague-Chelmsford proposals, two committees were appointed towards the end of 1918 to make recommendations on (i) the question of franchise and (ii) Imperial and Provincial subjects and division of functions in the provincial government.[100] The U.U.C. was represented by two members who were interviewed by the Bihar and Orissa Government at Bankipur and demanded through a memorial that in the provincial council of Bengal there should be at least one representative from the Oriya community (they also made demands of similar nature in respect of Madras and Central Provinces). This was made on the ground of their numeral strength as also because of the Franchise Committee's recommendation regarding representation of each independent racial unit.[101] However, this demand went unheeded whereas, in the main Orissa, the domiciled Bengalis were granted the status.

By far the most exhaustive work for the cause of the Oriya amalgamation was done through a book written in 1919 by Niranjan Patnaik and Chakrapani Pradhan. The book entitled, The Oriya Movement wrote that "on account mainly of the similarity between the Oriya and the Bengalee languages and the close resemblance in the social customs and manners of the two races, the Oriyas easily yield to the disruptive forces at work threatening their identity as a community." The book therefore pleaded "the evils consequent on such a Bengalization are thus very marked and require speedy remedy."[102]

In 1920, when Sachidananda Sinha moved a resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council on the amalgamation of the outlying

Oriya-speaking tracts, an investigation was thought necessary by the Government in Bengal to go into the question of amalgamation of some Oriya tracts in Midnapore. Subsequently, a survey was made by the District Magistrate of Midnapore, in some villages belonging to Thana Ramnagar and some other places.[103] The Bengal Provincial Government made their views known in 1922 in the following manner: "... The inhabitants, owing to their long residence in Bengal, differed in their manners and customs from the inhabitants of Orissa proper and had no desire to be separated from Bengal."[104] The Simon Commission noted that "in Bengal, there is only the possibility of minor adjustmertts of boundary in the circles of Mohanpur and Gopiballabhpur in the interests of Orissa."105

This indicated that even till the late twenties, there was no sincere agitation on the part of the Oriyas in Midnapore to be amalgamated to the main Orissa. In fact, the movement was injected into Midnapore from the main Orissa and in doing so the Oriya leaders fought against heavy odds.

Birendranath Sasmal

The Oriyas found in the personality of Birendranath Sasmal a redoubtable opponent who was to become a pivotal figure in deciding the fate of the various Oriya-speaking areas of Midnapore district in favour of Bengal. He was almost the unchallenged leader of Midnapore during the freedom struggle and indeed, carved a niche for himself among the eminent leaders of Bengal in those days. In order to analyse the stance that Birendranath Sasmal took on the amalgamation issue, it would be pertinent to highlight some of his achievements that brought him a place of honour in Bengal.

Birenedranath (1881-1934) was born at Chandibheti of Contai Subdivision, Midnapore, as the son of Visvambhar Sasmal. The Kayasth family, into which he was born, was an enlightened one and was greatly influenced by the Brahmo religion. Birendranath,

after completing his education in Calcutta, went over to England for studying Law at Middle Temple and returned to Calcutta in 1904 as barrister. He joined the Calcutta High Court bar and started practising but subsequently came back to Midnapore for continuing his legal practice. In 1921, when the non-cooperation movement spread all over India, Birendranath joined the movement under the great nationalist leader, Chittranjan Das, and gave up his law practice.[106]

Around the same time, another event took place which shot him into fame. In Midnapore, the Union Boards under the Bengal Village Local Self-Government Act V of 1919 had not been introduced and the government decided to introduce them now; accordingly by a notification, 228 Union Boards were established in district. Birendranath Sasmal wanted permission from Gandhi to launch a civil disobedience movement as well as a no-tax campaign against the introduction of these Union Boards. The permission was refused as an all India policy. However, Birendranath and his associates "wanted to create history in this part of India and made up their minds to go against the mandate of the Congress and Mahatma. They launched a tearing campaign for civil disobedience and non-payment of Union Board taxes..."[10] Birendranath was arrested. However, on 23 November 1921, the government withdrew the notification and Birendranath was hailed as a 'national hero'. Mahatma congratulated Sasmal and wrote to him, "Your success justifies your revolt."[108] In1922, he was the chairman of the District Board in Midnapore[109] and next year got elected to the Bengal Legislative Council.[110] In 1925, he was elected as the president of the Provincial Congress Committee, Bengal, which he however declined to accept due to the difference in opinion.[111]

Thus we find Birendranath achieving a meteoric rise in the political arena of Bengal where he came to be looked upon now as a potential leader and became a close associate of some of the

eminent politicians of the country including Chittaranjan Das. It is interesting, therefore, to follow the view of such a person on the amalgamation question of Midnapore. Godavaris Misra recounted, ". . . in the year 1919 myself and Gopabandhu Das had been to Birendranath Sasmal to hold discussions. He said to us, 'of course we were Oriyas at one time but that is only a memory consigned to history. You had better give up our hopes'. We sighed and came back."[112] These brief words would amply demonstrate Birendranath Sasmal's stance in respect of the Midnapore issue and would also explain his subsequent moves.

Birendranath knew that his position in the political map would be more prominent only if he safeguarded the interests of Bengalis. On the other hand, backing up the Oriyas or, identifying himself with the Oriyas would not only get him tagged up with almost a losing cause but would indeed jeopardise his political ambitions. This stand he was articulating in spite of his occasional bitter experiences with the Bengalis.[113] In 1925, with the death of Chittaranjan, Birendranath assumed the role of the unchallenged leader in Midnapore, and he re-entered the Congress at the request of the Mahatma and Basanti Devi (widow of Chittaranjan Das).[114] Thus, instead of plunging into the Oriya cause and becoming a big fish in a small kettle, Birendranath now saw his chance and preferred to play the role of a local stalwart who could control Midnapore for Bengal.

Oriya Movement in the Thirties

In 1930, when the Civil Disobedience movement seized the whole country, Midnapore also took an active part.[115] In fact the revolutionary activities in Midnapore became very instense and militant.[116] It now attracted the attention of the whole country and Bengal must have prided in Midnapore. The Oriyas of the district also came into limelight for their role in the non-cooperation struggle.[117]

The following year saw a good deal of Oriya nationalIst activities with the help of leaders from the main Orissa. The speech of the Parla chief at the first Round Table Conference raised the morale of the pro-amalgamation leaders and the approaching census also stirred them up. 'Utkala Dipika' brought out a touching editorial highlighting the suffering of the Oriyas in the outlying tracts particularly in Midnapore and Singhbhum where they were deprived of the opportunity of writing, and even speaking their mother-tongue.[118] Another newspaper lamented that barring L.N. Sahu, no other Oriya leader was known to have set his foot in Midnapore and Phuljhar.[119] A letter written by an Oriya of the outlying tract appeared in a newspaper which pointed out the sad fact that the 1911 census had recorded over 50 thousand Oriyas only in the Ramnagar Thana but by 1921 the number was reduced to only 150. He was of the opinion that the actual numerical strength of the Oriyas in the area was much more than this meagre figure.[120] 'Utkala Dipika' in one of its editions cautioned the people against various kinds of conspiracies, being hatched by antagonists and exhorted them to work unitedly, before the census took place on 26 Febuary.[121] In the same newspaper another appeal, signed by Radhanath Pati, Advocate, Midnapore, Bhagabat Chandra Das, Advocate, Midnapore, L.N. Sahu, Bhuyan K.C. Rai Mohapatra, Biswanath Das and Bhubanananda Das appeared which urged the Oriyas of Midnapore to work for their amalgamation in Orissa and also to record their identity as Oriyas.

On 7 March, the editorial of 'Utkala Dipika' alleged that the Bengali census officers had violated instructions of the authorities to enter Oriya people as Oriya, even though they spoke Bengali outside. The paper further complained that a sort of fear psychosis was being spread among the Oriyas, that the land tax would go up.[122] On 14 March, an appeal was inserted in 'Utkala Dipika' by the 'Oriyas of Midnapore' which said:

". . . our present situation indicates that unless we take precautionary measures, we will not able to preserve our distinctiveness for long. We will be converted then into another race and shall be speaking a different language . . . Unless our rightful demands are granted now, we will live under humiliation for all time to come and shall forfeit our indepen-dence . . ."[123]

The appeal was signed by Hema Chandra Tripathy, Choudhury Ram Chandra Saha, Dasarathi Pati, Surendra Nath Mukhopadhyay, Prabir Chandra Das, Bhuyam Mahesh Chandra Das Mohapatra, Satis Chandra Maity, Janakinath Das—all from Dantan of Midnapore. 'Samaj' demanded that the boundary of Orissa must include Contai sub-division, Kespur, Dantan, Gopiballabhapur, Jhargaon and Narayangarh.[124] The Orissa All-Parties Conference held a meeting of its executive committee on 30 May at Cuttack where it was decided to entrust the responsibility of formulating the scheme for campaiging in the Oriya-speaking tracts to Mukunda Prasad Das. He was requested to decide on the modus operandi and initimate the committee about it.[125] 'Samaj' pleaded with the rulers and landlords of the outlying tracts to stand united with the All-Parties Conference and contribute liberally to the fund for carrying out propaganda work at Midnapore.[126] Subsequently, it was reported that some important government servants were providing Oriya books as well as financial aid for the propaganda work at Midnapore.[127]

Soon, a counter-campaign was launched in Midnapore. The newspapers in Bengal, for example, 'Search Light' (16 July 1931) and 'Samay' (11 July 1931) countered the idea of parting with Midnapore.[128] Around this time, the Government's announcement about the formation of the Boundary Commission became public. Birendranath Sasmal wired to Gandhi urging that Midnapore be excluded from the amalgamation scheme with Orissa.[129] A booklet in English entitled 'Amputation of Midnapore' was written and circulated by him, which was however exposed to criticism in

Orissa for allegedly containing misleading and inaccurate information.[130]

The news about the Boundary Commission also accelerated the Oriya campaign. The Orissa Provincial Congress Committee decided to send Nanda Kisore Das for the propaganda work in Midnapore.[131] Godavaris Misra, Nilakantha Das, Niranjan Patnaik, L.N. Sahu and Jadumani Mangaraj also campaigned in Midnapore.[132] They conducted meetings, formed associations and toured extensively, earnestly asking the Oriyas to join their nationalist movement for amalgamating Midnapore with Orissa.[133] The 'Midnapore Utkal Association', already formed in 1929[134] was encouraged to step up the agitation for amalgamation. Banchhanidhi Mohanty almost became a 'roving bard' moving from place to place singing his Oriya patriotic songs.[135] Oriya newspapers started publishing assurances to the effect that if Midnapore came to Orissa, Bengali language would be allowed to continue in the courts for some years.[136]

During this time when it came to be known that the All India Congress would hold its next session in Orissa, some influential Congress leaders of Contai informed the President of the Orissa Provincial Congress Committee that Contai was willing to come into the fold of Orissa. They added further that if the people of Orissa were keen on getting Midnapore ceded to Orissa, they should make Birendranath Sasmal the President of the Reception Committee for the ensuing annual session.[137] To this, the Orissa Congress President was reported to have reciprocated warmly by saying that if the Congress Committee of Contai would be merged with them and if sufficient number of members from Contai were inducted into the Reception Committee, they would be only too glad to greet Birendranath Sasmal as the President of the Reception Committee.

The apparent softening of attitude by Birendranath, which his offer revealed, could have actually been the result of

manoeuvre to help him gain some lost grounds in the political arena. His influence in the Bengal Congress had been on the wane with his disapproval of the terrorist activities in the district.[138] He even failed to win the election of the Bengal Legislative Council.[139] However, the genuineness of the offer of the pro-Birendranath group could not be put to test as the scheduled Congress session at Puri never came through. Birendranath seemed to salvage some prestige for his scathing criticism of the government for being responsible for the Hijli jail tragedy.[140] Meanwhile, the Tamluk Congress Committee pointed out that if Contai were united with Orissa, the local people would suffer immensely both on social and economic fronts.[141]

The pro- and anti-amalgamation movement continued to sweep Midnapore vigorously. The earlier stand of Birendranath appeared a very short-lived affair, as he despatched wires to the Viceroy and the Prime Minister of England apprising them of the situation as well as expressing his own views in the matter.[142] Bhagabata Chandra Das, the President of the 'Oriya Separation Association' retaliated by sending wires to them to the effect that the south-west portion of Midnapore be united with Orissa.[143] Birendranath was accused of influencing the Oriyas in Midnapore with money and false information. The Oriyas in Midnapore were told that if some areas were united with Orissa, the Muslims would dominate in the rest of the region.[144] An Oriya youth named Dharanidhar Das who even had studied in the school at Mayurbhanj, Orissa, turned out to be a leader in the anti-amalgamation movement and is reported to have organised a physical attack on Godavaris in one of his meetings and even threatened further., "if needed, we will take the path of violence . . ."[145] It is interesting to note that this very young man had earlier been inducted into the permanent committee that was formed at a meeting in Gopiballabhpur on 13.8.1931 in support of the Oriya amalgamation move.[146] In two months time he appeared to change

his colour and went against amalgamation. This is only one of many instances which would illustrate the point that under some influence many Oriya youth preferred to stay back with Bengal. The students of Orissa, however, showed keen interest in Midnapore now. They started collecting funds in Orissa in order to counteract the opposite camp's campaign which had by now started pouring large sums and had engaged a large squad; some two hundred Congress workers from Calcutta were reported to have been working with the support of Birendranath Sasmal.[147] On 17 November 1931, 25 students from Cuttack left for Midnapore to carryon propaganda work.[148]

The Boundary Commission and Midnapore

When the Boundary Commission reached Midnapore, it took evidences from many persons including Birendranath himself.[149] The two memorandums received by the commission included one from 'The Oriya Association of Midnapore' and the other from 'The Midnapore Anti-Partition Committee'.

The Oriya Association urged that the South-West Midnapore consisting of (i) Jhargram sub-division, (ii) the Contai sub-division, and (iii) five thanas of Sadar sub-division namely Kharagpur, Narayangarh, Kesiari, Dantan and Mohanpur be constituted into a district and should be transferred from Bengal Presidency to be annexed to the province of Orissa. They narrated how, after the separation of Orissa from the Bengal Presidency in 1911, the Oriya people of the South-West Midnapore had lost all hopes of preserving their identity. They did not have any representation in the provincial legislature and the proposal for making southern Midnapore a separate district had failed. They added a historical sketch and a linguistic note which purported to show that in 1852 Mr. Bailey, the then Collector of Midnapore, after taking account of various factors, had proposed in his memorandum the transfer of Hijli and South-Midnapore to Orissa and that subsequent reports of Hunter, Grierson, O'Malley, Manmohan Chakravorty

and R.D. Banerjee had also shared the same view. There was an exhaustive note on the social, cultural and ethnological aspects which spoke of the social and religious customs and rites, surnames of people, festivals, special Oriya land-tenures, peculiarities of villages (costom of heredity and primogeniture in succession to village-offices of Midnapore) and showed their close affinity with the people of Orissa. There was also a geographical note attached to attest the claim of Orissa on this land. It said that the South-West Midnapore had the characteristic mountainous terrain of the contiguous Orissa-areas as opposed to the flat profile of the rest of the district. There was also a note on the census figures and finally an observation on the financial feasibility.[150]

The 'Anti-Partition Committee', in its memorandum did not dwell on the past ties the people of Midnapore had with Orissa. It argued, instead, on the basis of the will of the present generation, that was pointed out to be clearly against any move to unite Midnapore with Orissa. They claimed to have collected the opinions of people from all the areas demanded by Oriya irredentists and said that Hindus of Southern Midnapore were unwilling to be transferred. The Mahammadans also, they claimed, were opposed to any shifting as that would place them as a very week minority with about 12%, and secondly Jinnah's 14-points also included that 'the present Presidency of Bengal should not be distributed in anyway'. Finally, the memorandum made it clear that they were not even prepared to accept that the people of South Midnapore were ethnologically Oriyas.[151]

The Boundary Commission on their part, while putting down their own views, added a note on the history of the areas of Midnapore and referred to the opinions of the eminent historians. They observed from this survey that steady Bengalisation of the areas had taken place and the census figures of 1891,1901, 1911, and 1921 corroborated that. Regarding Ramnagar where there were 50,962 Oriyas as per the census of 1911 and only 168, according

to 1921 census, the Committee attributed the astounding fall in the figure to a genuine unwillingness on the part of the residents to be transferred to Orissa. The people of Ramnagar did not want, for example, to be transferred to Balasore and had petitioned against it. They were afraid of the Oriya agitation and had appealed to the Government on the subject before the Census. Apparently their leaders had guessed that in deciding on the matter, the Government of India would give great weight to the language figures of the Census, and they saw to it that the language in common use was returned as Bengali and not as Oriya on this occasion. They also referred to the 23,590 Oriyas (1931 figure) of Dantan out of total number of 45,101. But in no other thana was the proportion as high as 10% and only in 3 thanas did it exceed 5%. The Committee quoted the views of the then Census Superintendent on the issue of steady decrease in the Oriya population which forwarded three explanations -(i) the language being a mixture of dialects could be described as either Bengali or Oriya, (ii) Bengali was the language of the schools and of the courts, (iii) fashion or prejudices of the enumerators. The Committee intended to find out the racial distributions of the areas on the basis of castes. In this connection they made their attitude clear by saying:

"If by the Oriya race we mean castes which had their origin in Orissa it is possible that this classification underestimated the Oriya population. The 'Kaibartas' who style themselves as 'Mahishyas' are the largest caste in Midnapore and Grierson conjectures that they entered Midnapore from Orissa. But we are concerned with existing facts and not with remote racial origins and for our purpose, a caste which now describes itself a Bengali and speaks Bengali, may legitimately be treated as a Bengali caste."

The report went on:

"Overwhelming majority of the people are against the transfer-opposition confined to Bengalis, Oriyas too divided on the issue-

it is due (to some extent) to the propaganda carried out by the local Congress. The transfer to Orissa of nearly 1½ million Hindus would reduce appreciably the existing Hindu majority in this part of Bengal and is naturally unwelcome to the Hindu politicians . . .

"Orissa during the last century has made less progress than Bengal. In literature, science and politics Bengali also out-distanced Oriya and at Midnapore at any rate, the prestige of Bengal is higher than that of Orissa. The older men had sentimental ties but the younger men thought it better to be bound up with Bengal . . ."[152]

Thus the claim of Oriyas, observed the Committee, failed on all counts. The Oriya claim on some portions of Bankura district was completely repudiated by the Committee.

After the Boundary Commission report was published, the Oriya leaders virtually gave up all hopes of getting the Midnapore areas. There were however various meetings criticising the report and exploring possibilities of sustaining the struggle. The U.U.C. session of 1932 demanded that the Oriya claims for various territories should be agreed to. The Leaders Conference of 1933 was attended by Hema Chandra Tripathy and Charuchandra Mohanty from Midnapore which put forward its claim on Midnapore. But the fire of agitation was, for all intents and purposes, extinguished. In 1936, Orissa was created as a separate province without Midnapore forming part of it.

Conclusion

Looking back one realises that the situation in Midnapore had been appropriately summed up by the Boundary Commission when they recommended the undesirability of the transfer on account of the unwillingness of the people. Going through the news-items one finds that the press as well as the Oriya leaders woke up to the problem and actively gave credence to the agitation only towards the end of 1930. Even this belated effort, as had been described in some detail, was too meagre and too inadequate to

tackle the situation and match the resourcefulness of the opposite camp. In any case, for all intents and purposes, the issue of Midnapore had already been settled by the turn of the century when the people, while being forced into the alien language for expediency (as Bengali was the only language accepted in courts and school) had accepted the new language and to some extent, the culture. Thereafter, in the 1920s or in the 1930s the course could have swayed in favour of the Oriyas had the influential leader, Birendranath Sasmal taken sides with them. But that was ruled out and with the powerful backing from the Bengal Provincial Committee and the blessing of Birendranath in terms of money and men, it was almost a foregone conclusion that the areas would never be merged into Orissa.

When a comparison is made between the cases of Midnapore and Ganjam, we find that Midnapore never, on her own, took initiative in the Oriya movement. She was instigated by the leaders from the main Orissa and that too much too late. One cannot help risking an observation that if a handful of leaders had undertaken the same amount of trouble a quarter century earlier, the result might have been otherwise. But the moderates never felt the urge to work in Midnapore, and when the Oriya Congress leaders saw the necessity, the fate had been sealed.

Another important factor which appeared to have contributed to the apathy of the Oriya youth in Midnapore to the cause of the amalgamation, was the overwhelming influence of radical Congress activities which raged through the district during the same period. The younger generation did not face as much of a handicap as their preceding generation on account of language and saw a good opportunity for identifying themselves with the main stream of life in Midnapore by plunging into the Congress activities. Not only that. Even as an agitation, the Oriya struggle appeared much narrower in scope, and a lack-lustre affair connected with a problem essentially of the past in comparison

with the radical Congress activities which were surely more lively and therefore far more attractive. Thus, their attention got totally diverted to the latter issue.

The local zamindars, unlike those in Ganjam, identified themselves with the Bengali culture and took no interest in the Oriya agitation prior to 1930.[153] They perhaps never felt strong allegiance to Lord Jagannath, for the Khurda King, the representative of Jagannath had his jurisdiction limited to the area extending from the river Mahanadi to Parlakimedi of Ganjam. The portions lying to the north of the river Mahanadi were placed at the disposal of seven principal zamindars and Midnapore was distributed among some of these zamindaries. Midnapore therefore never saw it as a humiliation to stay away from Orissa.

Nevertheless, a look into the state of affairs in Midnapore from the coign of vantage reveals a linguistic metamorphosis of a people who have been allowed by and large to join the mainstream of life in Bengal and a dispassionate observer would surely be at peace with the situation.

Singhbhum

History

Singhbhum district which remained with the Chotanagpur division in Bihar and Orissa province when it was created in 1911, was with the same division under the Bengal Presidency in the preceding period. Two main states and some subordinate estates constituted the district in the earlier period. Its eastern portion was known as Dhalbhum after the name of its Dhal chief who claimed Brahmanical descent though it was possibly the Bhumijas who founded the dynasty.[154] The legends say that the Dhals took permission from the Raja Rudraditya Dev of Orissa for setting up their dynasty and owed allegiance to the Gajapatis of Orissa ever since[155] The rest of the district was known as Porahat or Singhbhum ruled by the 'Singh' rulers. Tradition has it that a Rathore Rajput en route to Puri on a pilgrimage to Lord Jagannath,

was crowned king of this land by the Bhuiya tribe.[156] The aboriginals were the early inhabitants of Singhbhum among whom subsequently the 'Hos' became predominant. The Hos were believed to have emigrated from Chotanagpur and subdued the Bhuiyas who had dwelt there. The Hos then settled themselves in a hilly area in the south and successfully maintained their independence in the face of invasions. This tract came to be known as Kolhan.[157]

Dhalbhum was the first region of the district to have come under the British supremacy. In 1771, its chief, Jagannath Dhal was subdued by the British who decided to allow its hereditary chief to rule here but to control the overall administration from Midnapore. In 1833, It was taken away from Midnapore and was annexed to Manbhum. The administration was vested in an officer who was to operate as 'Agent' to the Governor-General in the South-West Frontier. In 1848 it was transferred to the Singhbhum district.[158]

The Hos who had mainly stuck to the Kolhan tract surrendered to the British in 1821.[159] The latter then imposed the condition on them that they should also learn Oriya and Hindi as aboriginal language was unintelligible.[160] In 1835, the Hos instigated by the ruler of Singhbhum, rose, in revolt against the British Government, and posed problems for the administration both in the Mughalbandi and in the Garjat areas. However, the British forces under Captain Wilkinson were able to quell this uprising of the Hos at various centres.[161] The Government decided subsequently therefore to include some of the scattered centres of the Hos into a single unit, and formed the Kolhan estate. This estate was completely annexed by the British in 1836 and a British officer was stationed at Chaibasa for its administration.[162]

Porahat was the last tract of Singhbhum to come under the British sway. It had all along identified itself with the cause of tradition and culture of the Hindu kings. It is said that the chiefs

and landlords of Singhbhum like Kera, Manoharpur, Chandpur, Anandpur including Seraikella and Kharswan were descendants of the same parent stocks of the raja of Porahat.[163] The Raja had family alliance with the Sambalpur ruling house and had maintained close links with them. Raja Arjun Singh had joined his forces with the mutineers in 1857 and encouraged them at Chaibasa and Ranchi. The British, however, thwarted these attacks and subdued the estate in 1858. In 1892, it was incorporated in the Singhbhum district. The entire Singhbhum district was placed with the Chotanagpur sub-division under the Bengal Province in 1892.[164] Although Singhbhum was brought under the Bengal Province, it was not included in the Orissa division; this step in fact started the neglect of Oriya language in these areas as the reports mention. Gradually the language lost its importance here when Hindi was extended into Porahat and Bengali into the Dhalbhum areas in schools and offices.

Seraikella and Kharswan, the two other important states in Singhbhum were having a cordial relationship with the British right from the time of the latter's occupation of the neighbouring territories. In 1823, they accepted the suzerainty of the British. Subsequently in 1854, when the South-West Frontier Agency was abolished, the states came under the jurisdiction of the deputy commissioner of Singhbhum and were subject to the general supervision of the Chotanagpur commissioner.[165] The chiefs of these areas were coming to the aid of the British in suppressing frequent uprisings that occurred in the nearby regions. They obtained some territories of Porahat as a reward for their help to the British during the Mutiny in 1857.[166] These two states were transferred in 1916 to the control of the political agent of the Orissa feudatory states.[167]

Beginning of the Oriya Movement

Until about 1911, the Oriya nationalism was almost a far cry in Singhbhum. This region, a far off place from Cuttack which was

then the centre of Oriya nationalist activity, was almost completely in the dark about the formation of U.U.C. and other such exciting happenings in the mainland. On account of this geographical distance, the Oriya-speaking people of Singhbhum did not join the mainstream of the movement for a long time.

Although the nationalist movement as a distinct force came to Singhbhum later, the dismembered Oriyas were considerably encouraged through the governmental circular of 1903 albeit its reticence over Singhbhum and Midnapore. In 1905 their aspirations drew fresh inspiration from the announcement of the union of Sambalpur with Orissa. The Oriya amalgamation activities appear to have assumed importance after the constitution of the province of Bihar and Orissa in 1911. The reason is not far to seek. The announcement of 1911 made provisions for the transfer of the Chotanagpur division including Singhbhum from Bengal and placed it with Bihar in the new province. To the Oriyas the government move appeared to be in total disregard of their appeal for amalgamation. The feeling of disappointment fanned their nationalist feeling. Such a sentiment derived further strength when the U.U.C. began taking particular interest in the problems of the Singhbhum Oriyas and resolved in the ninth session that Oriya be introduced as the court language in Singhbhum.[168] The essence of this resolution was echoed in the subsequent sessions too. In 1914, Ananta Misra was appointed as the official campaigner of U.U.C. for propagating the Oriya movement in the dismembered Oriya tracts. For the eleventh session of the U.U.C. in 1915 held at Sambalpur, the raja of Kera in Singhbhum, Lakshminarayan Singhdeo, who was a personal friend of Gopabandhu and related to the chief of Bamanda was requested to grace the presidential chair. This elated the Singhbhum people and instilled in them a sense of belonging to a linguistic region -- a feeling which had remained subdued so far.

The first significant response of the Oriyas in Singhbhum is believed to have taken place, when a memorial was submitted by them on 21 January 1916 to the Bihar-Orissa Lieutenant-Governor stating that, "Oriya was taught in pathsalas (primary schools) and used in courts until the district was placed under the Commissionership of Hazaribag when the various departments of the Government were manned by Hindi-speaking people who preferred their own language to Oriya to be used in official documents and communications for their own convenience, while the Bengali officers in the Dhalbhum estate introduced Bengali there in preference to Oriya. Thus, under the influence of Bengali- and Hindi-speaking officers, Oriya gradually lost its place in schools and Government offices and Hindi and Bengali became the two recognized vernaculars in the district, though Oriya still continues to be taught in some solitary private schools and pathsalas and used by private parties in the writing of their deeds and documents."[169]

The Oriyas in Singhbhum became gradually vocal about their grievances. 'Asa' commented that the Oriyas in Singhbhum and Seraikella were slowly, rising to national consciousness.[170] It referred to the existence of two clubs, namely 'Udita Club' and 'Juba Samiti' which merged now under the name of 'United Udita Club'. This club successfully resisted the introduction of Bengali in the local schools in place of Oriya. It also sent an appeal to the Chotanagpur Commissioner to continue Oriya in courts and not to impose Hindi. The Commissioner appeared to have agreed. The same newspaper also reported that the people were enthusiastically trying to open up new branches of this club throughout the district.[171]

These people were a good deal encouraged by the letter of an English officer, Mr. Johnston when he wrote to the Government on 5 June 1916 saying that in Singhbhum, Seraikella and Kharswan great inconveniences were being faced in the absence of Oriya in

courts.[172] In August of the same year, Gopabandhu Das on his way back home after attending the Legislative Assembly session at Patna, visited Singhbhum and toured various interior places.[173] He met, during his visit, a large number of leaders, including the 'Ho' leader Dolmanki, who seemed to have told Gopabandhu that he would prefer that his tribesmen study in Oriya.[174] Gopabandhu's visit provided a fillip to the struggle of the Oriyas and brought to surface the grievances that went so long unheard. Gopabandhu realised that this region demanded dedicated work for alleviating the disadvantages of the people and from this time on, he devoted a lot of his time and energy in spreading Oriya education, and carrying on social activities in Singhbhum.

Gopabandhu wrote a long letter to the Deputy Commissioner Garrett and acquainted him with the Oriya problem in Singhbhum. Garrett put down his remarks in that letter and passed them onto the Commissioner of Chotanagpur.[175]

Some excerpts of the letter were published in the Samaj dated 22 July 1931. It said: "that the Porahat and Dhalbhum are essentially Oriya when they are not aboriginal, is undeniable . . . Every step that has been taken in the direction of abolishing the Oriya language in these tracts is based on the efforts of the wrong that has been done in the past and is still being prepetuated."

The Commissioner of Chotanagpur, Mr. Foley, on receipt of this report, conveyed his impression to the Bihar-Orissa state Government in the following note: "It is, I believe, true that the Bengali element has undue influence in Singhbhum, but I believe that the same thing will be found in a lesser degree in Cuttack, Balasore and Puri. If it is desired to exclude Bengalis as much as possible and to give more power to the Oriyas it would seem advisable that Singhbhum should be transferred to the Orissa Division."[176]

It is interesting to notice that even after the creation of Bihar and Orissa province, the Bengali influence was dominant in the

district, especially in Dhalbhum region. However, the suggestion of the Chotanagpur Commissioner kindled a ray of hope in the hearts of the Oriyas that if an agitation was carried on by them demanding an amalgamation with Orissa division perhaps their grievances would be redressed.

Ananta Misra started campaigning for the spread of the Oriya education after 1915; Krushna Chandra Acharya, a resident of Kharswan tried to impress the people with his narration of the past glories of Oriyas in Singhbhum.[177] A 'Singhbhum Utkala Sabha' was formed[178] and the chiefs of Seraikella and Kharswan, and of Dhalbhum and Porahat supported the cause of Oriya in schools and courts.[179] The U.U.C. members encouraged the movement in Singhbhum and Gopabandhu Das volunteered to work in Singhbhum for four months.[180] The editor of 'Asa', S.B.Rath, even donated a gold ring from his hand for the cause of the Oriya agitation in Singhbhum.[181]

Godavaris Misra in Singhbhum

In the main Orissa, the moderates apparently failed to cash in on the opportune moment and remained satisfied only with their resolutions. Gopabandhu Das, on the other hand, came forward with a more realistic approach to the situation.

By 1919, Gopabandhu's school at Satyavadi had been established for a decade and in addition to the five main teachers, others had also joined in. The school appeared already on a firm footing. Gopabandhu desired that the founding teachers who had dedicated themselves in making Satyavadi an ideal school should come forward now to establish such institutions in the outlying tracts too. Gopabandhu's approach to Oriya nationalism was based on well-defined principle; he knew that the Oriyas suffered most in the outlying tracts on account of their minority status resulting in as much educational as socio-economic problems. He had felt, therefore, that intensive work need be taken up in these areas if the Oriyas were to maintain any vestige of separate identity. His

plans had included the setting up of schools at various levels where Oriya children would have a scope to read in their mother tongue[182] and even desired that each village should have 'Bhagabata tungis' in keeping with a typical Oriya tradition where the people could assemble in the evenings to reciting and discussing their religious scriptures. This way he thought, their distinctiveness would stand on a solid foundation. Gopabandhu also knew that the rightful claim of the people could be fulfilled only if they were educated to shake off their difference and surface their grievances with courage.

All this required meticulous planning and supervision, and was quite an onerous task. Godavaris Misra, one of tht closest associates of Gopabandhu and an eminent teacher of the Satyavadi school was requested by Gopabandhu to undertake the mission.[183] It is reported that Gopabandhu took Godavaris along with him and arrived at Chakradharpur town of the Singbbhum district in the afternoon of 8 February 1919.[184] Godavaris vividly recounts in his autobiography how warmly they were received at the railway station by all sections of the population including Biharis, Bengalis and Oriyas. After introducing Godavaris to the people in a public meeting Gopabandhu returned. Godavaris' task was far from easy-there was before him a large section of people who spoke a language that was unintelligible to him (he was yet to pick up Hindi). In addition, generating a sense of unity among one section of the people without antagonising the other was an uphill task. However, Godavaris was of a different stock--he would not yield so easily. Apart from his credentials as a dedicated worker in the tradition of Satyavadi, he was also a person with deep understanding of human behaviour--that in fact had made him a great poet, and now his humanistic approach found a virgin field for application. Within a short period, Godavaris started taking things in his stride and consolidated his position.

His first effort was the establishment of a school in the Raghuram Marwari's inn which soon became a high school. Godavaris was immensely helped in his endeavours by Dinanath Pandey--a trader from Mathura. Dinanath constructed a building for the school and provided much of the required finance. Another close associate of Godavaris was a young sub-inspector of police, Gatikrishna Sadangi, who gave up his job after the arrival of Godavaris and worked with him with utmost dedication.[185]

The appearance of Godavaris boosted the spirit of the Oriyas in Singhbhum. Around March 1919, they formed one 'Singhbhum Oriya education fund' and through this organisation strove to establish Oriya schools for spreading Oriya education.[186] In an appeal made through 'Utkala Dipika', Gopabandhu Das and some Singbbhum Oriya leaders like Krushna Chandra Acharya, Bhagaban Sadangi, Kahnukisore Pani, Purna Chandra Tripathy and Madon Mohan Sadangi pointed out that only if Oriya schools were set up then the Oriya children who were now reading through Bengali or Hindi medium finding no other alternative, would surely come to read in these schools and since the majority were Oriyas, the Hindi and Bengali schools would gradually lose their importance. It was also argued that only in such an event would the government be forced to make a correct assessment of the situation.[187] Ananta Misra, the campaigner, went from village to village explaining these facts and collecting funds for this small organisation.[188]

To carry on propaganda work in a more exhaustive manner in Singhbhum, he even took pains to bring out a newspaper from there.[189] In the 15th session of the U.U.C. in 1919, one Oriya preservation fund was set up. A committee consisting of ten members from various places was constituted to help in promoting and spreading Oriya education.[190]

In the early 1920s, the people of Gayalamunda in Porahat started one primary school and appointed an Oriya Pandit. They

appealed to the 'Oriya preservation fund' for donation and were promised six rupees per month.[191] 'Asa' vouched for the institution and urged the Government also to come forward to help the infant institution.[192] Godavaris took the initiative in opening up many primary schools beside his high schools. Gopabandhu, through his 'one-paise fund' collected donations for financing primary education in the outlying tracts.[193]

Thus the Oriya nationalism which became identifiable only in 1916 was already a force to reckon with by 1920. Dhalbhum and Porahat chiefs expressed their desire to be united with the main Orissa which they thought would solve once and for all the problem faced in administration owing to the introduction of a foreign tongue in the courts, offices, as well as in schools.[194] Kolhan took the same stand, when their leader, Dolmanki wrote on 12 February 1919 ". . . There is no Bengali- or Hindi-speaking Aryan people except Oriyas in any Ho village in Kolhan ."[195]

The census figures further illustrated the fact that the Oriya agitaion checked a process of derecognising the Oriyas. According to 1911 census, the total population of the Singhbhum district was 6,94,394 of which Oriyas accounted for only 1,24,593.[196] In the 1921 census the total population was reported as 7,59,438 and Oriyas numbered 1,40,821, Bengalis and Biharis forming a comparatively minority group and the overwhelming bulk was that of the Hos.[197] The Hos, as their leader Dolmanki had said were inclined more towards the Oriyas on the basis of language and therefore the Oriya leaders were very optimistic about the amalgamation of the Singhbhum tract with the main Orissa.

Subsequently, the situation took a different turn presenting new scenes and opening up new possibilities. The Oriya leaders in Singhbhum used to receive help and co-operation from various non-Oriya sources at the beginning when their activities were limited to the sphere of development of education of the Oriyas. But as the nationalistic struggle became more and more

pronounced, it gave birth to apprehensions in the minds of these benefactors and they did not conceal their hostile attitude to the cause of Oriyas now.[198] At this juncture, the Oriya leaders took a step that further intensified this ill-feeling. It was decided to hold the 16th annual session of the U.U.C. at Chakradharpur. This step could have been looked upon as a sensible one at an earlier period for Singhbhum and Midnapore were yet to host a U.U.C. session. However, an anti-Oriya wave had just begun to rise in the area with the Congress suggestion to divide the provinces on a linguistic basis and with both the Biharis and the Oriyas staking their claims on Singhbhum.[199] Further, the decision by the U.U.C. to adopt non-cooperation movement launched by the Congress also alienated many residents of the area who were scared of the Government's reprisal. Even the students of the Chaibasa school were not permitted by their teachers to act as volunteers in the Conference.[200] It would appear from the events of the post-Chakradharpur period that the intensity of the Oriya agitation showed downward trend in this region after the acceptance of the non-cooperation principle by the U.U.C. 'Asa'pointed out that the situation was virtually the making of the local Oriyas who allowed themselves to be swayed away by the rhetoric of non-cooperation at the U.U.C. session at Chakradharpur .[201]

At the instance of Gopabandhu, Godavaris now converted the school into a national school which caused further dissatisfaction and apathy among many quarters and a good deal of workers deserted the school.[202]

But Godavaris never forgot what he considered was his main responsibility that of furthering the cause of the Oriya nationalism which had taken birth in Singhbhum. As the conflict between the Biharis and the Oriyas intensified in the wake of the Congress decision of lingistic division of provinces, Godavaris reported the matter to Rajendra Prasad in Bihar and Gopabandhu Das in Orissa. It was decided then that a committee of enquiry would

be set up comprising members from both parties to probe into the matter.[203]

The committee recommended that the decision whether Singhbhum would be attached to Bihar or to Orissa would rest with the Congress members of that district. Godavaris mentions that this proposal was conveyed by reply post-cards to all the Congress members who roughly numbered 5200. About 1000 kept silent. Out of the rest, 3900 were in favour of Orissa and 280 supported the Biharis. Consequently, the committee decided that Singhbhum would be represented tprough the Orissa Provincial Congress Committee. On the request of Godavaris, both Rajendra Prasad and Gopabandhu Das came down to Singhbhum to make the decision public.[204] The verdict of the committee however, was never honestly accepted by the Biharis.

In the meantime, the pro-Bihari feeling had mounted in Bihar and their leaders were conniving at the effort to bring down the Chakradharpur school that stood as a symbol of Oriya nationalism in Singhbhum. Because of its status as a national school, it also invited indignation of the government.[205]

Godavaris, who devoted his time to non-cooperation agitation in 1921 and was simultaneously trying hard to keep the Oriya movement going in Singhbhum, found himself in utter exhaustion by the following year. Without any funds being available for the school after the withdrawal of financial support from the local businessmen, he had to pass his days in the midst of starvation and total despair. By 1924, Gopabandhu Das went to jail and many other Oriya leaders followed suit. Godavaris found it impossible to continue and returned to his village Banpur in 1925.[206] With his exit, the Oriya agitation appeared to have lost its steam.

Revival of the Oriya Movement

Some life seemed to return to the Oriya movement in 1926 although years of inaction following the non-cooperation had

blunted it considerably. Lakshminarayan Sahu wrote an appeal in 'Prajatantra' entreating the young men from the main Orissa to volunteer for work in Singhbhum.[207] After Godavaris left, the Oriya school at Chakradharpur was in shambles. Now, Ananta Misra started a campaign to raise funds for rebuilding the school. He formed a local committee and took up the responsibility to work as its secretary.[208] He also attempted to establish a printing press to rejuvenate the propaganda work. All this led to a fresh spark of life in the Oriya movement in Singhbhum. New associations sprang up. The 'Golmundi Oriya Samaj' in Jamshedpur and associations called 'Santiniketan' supported by the young Oriya Brahmins and 'Binapani Club', a theatre group formed by Oriya youths became quite active.[209] The 'Singhbhum Utkala Sabha' started propaganda work vigorously when the news of Simon Commission reached the district.[210]

The Simon Commission Report came however as disappointment to the Oriyas, for although it recommended a sub-province for Orissa, it excluded the Singhbhum and Midnapore areas from the proposed Orissa map. It further announced that soon a Boundary Commission would start probing into the question of boundaries for the proposed Orissa Province. Under the circumstances, it was felt that intense campaigning on nation-wide scale was essential if the Oriyas intended to salvage some areas of Singhbhum. So again the indefatigable Godavaris returned to the scene for guiding the activities in the Bihar Oriya tracts. The 'Utkala Samiti' of Jamshedpur distributed pamphlets called 'Oriya problem' among the Oriyas and its president Godavaris Misra initiated collection of donations. The same year we find that conferences like the 'Students' Conference' and the 'Women's Conference' were all held in Jamshedpur.[211] The Singhbhum district Congress Conference met amidst a lot of excitement on 8 and 9 March 1930 with H.K.Mahtab as its President.[212] The Cuttack District Board Chairman Raibahadur Lakshmidhar Mohanty, who

was also a member of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, raised in the Legislature the issue of reviving the Oriya language in courts and offices, and in schools and colleges in Singhbhum.[213] Lakshmidhar Mohanty's proposal was opposed by the education Minister and the Director of Education of Bihar and Orissa on the ground that there was no certainty that Singhbhum would be attached to Orissa. However, his move was supported by some members including the Muslims and also by the Inspector of the Chotanagpur division.[214] 'Utkala Dipika', quoting the census figure where Oriyas were shown as 1.4 lakhs; Bengalis as 1.2 lakhs and Hindi-speaking only as 53,000 and mentioning the fact that the Hos expressed themselves in favour of the Oriya language, showed surprise that the Oriya language should have been banished in favour of Bengali and Hindi.[215] The same newspaper in its editorial captioned as 'the duties of Oriyas'lamented that the language in Singhbhum and Midnapore had eroded so much that genuine Oriyas were incapable of expressing themselves in their own language.[216] A host of letters appeared expressing the amalgamation of Singhbhum as the most vital aspect of the Oriya movement programme.[217]

Meetings were held in and around Singhbhum in rapid succession. In one such meetings on 26 July 1931 at Narasinghgarh of Dhalbhum, the earlier chief of Dhalbhum recounted the culture and heritage of Dhalbhum and its age-old ties with Orissa.[218] There were a large number of public meetings.[219] Many of these were organised by the tribal people who expressed their desire to be united with Orissa.[220] Apart from Godavaris and Ananta Misra another Oriya leader Jadugani Mangaraj also joined the campaign very actively.[221]

The Counter-Movement in Singhbhum

Meanwhile, the Oriyas noted with alarm a counter-movement begun by the Bengalis. By 1931, the Bengali had formed the 'Singhbhum Hitaisini Sabha' and the Calcutta Liberty commented

that this organisation was trying to work in favour of annexing Singhbhum to Bengal.[222] Rumour was spread by this anti-Oriya faction that the people would have to pay more on land tax if they went to Orissa. This created a natural apprehension among the peasants and a counter move was on, launched by the Oriyas to dispel such misgivings.[223]

The Oriyas also felt disconcerted at the reported role played by eminent national figures who hailed from Bengal and Bihar. It was reported that Subhas Chandra Bose had discussion with local Bengalis of Singhbhum on 29 September 1931 ostensibly for devising plans to justify their claim on the region.[224] The report further informed that on the following day, a meeting was held at Narendranath Rakshit's place in Jamshedpur with Subhas Chandra Bose as the president. The meeting was attended by Bengalis from all over Singhbhum. Even the rumour was in air that Rajendra Prasad was expected in the meeting. It was decided in the meeting to carryon campaigning against the Oriya cause and that a sum of Rs.2000 which had been collected by the Bengali society, would be available for the purpose.[225] The Bengali newspaper like A.B.Patrika also published reports pointing out that the tribals under their leader Dolmanki and Debendranath Samant, a local Bengali, were going against the Oriya cause by holding meetings in this connection.[226] Oriyas countered the news alleging that it was false.[227]

Nilakantha Das now decided to come over to Singhbhum for the propagation of the Oriya agitation and for sounding the Bengalis about the Oriya claim. But apparently the Bengalis made it quite clear to him that they would continue their fight at the moment to retain Singhbhum with Bihar, which Nilakantha interpreted as a camouflage to cover up their real intentions. His belief was that once the claim of Orissa overruled, Bengalis could later on claim this region, as Bihar possessed no basis to claim

Singhbhum. Nilakantha apparently pleaded with his Bengali friends who however did not relent.[228]

When the Boundary Commission began its enquiry, attempts were directed by the opposite camp to counter the Oriya efforts; the local Oriya leaders were harassed in various ways and humiliated before the public.[229] Debendranath Samant brought out a fortnightly called 'Chandini' that was primarily to counter the Oriya claim.[230] He even instigated the tribal people to support his move. It was alleged that these tribals, bribed and influenced by him, destroyed the standing paddy crops belonging to many Oriya peasants, and refused to repay the loans to the Oriyas. Apparently, the idea was to scare the poor Oriyas in villages and harass them so much that they would prefer not to identify themselves as Oriyas, some papers commented.[231]

All these also alienated the tribal people, mostly the Hos, from the Oriya cause. The Hos were by then becoming increasingly aware of their decisive role in the matter. It was significant at this stage that a few of them had bitter experiences with the Oriyas and were thus forced to change their stand with regard to Orissa.[232]

Nilakantha Das who went to Singhbhum to give his evidence before the Boundary Commission perhaps would have influenced the Commission with his convincing analysis of the Singhbhum case. But it was a time when the Government declared the Congress illegal and the Congress retaliated by boycotting the Government. In fact Rajendra Prasad, who was the General Secretary of the All India Congress, was reported to have instructed Nilakantha to boycott the Commission.[233] Nilakantha consequently submitted only his memorandum to the above Commission which was eventually not included in the latter's report.[234] The Boundary Commission did not include Singhbhum in the proposed province of Orissa. In the consequent governmental steps also, Singhbhum did not find any place in Orissa.

The Singhbhum 'Utkala Sabha' met for its tenth session on 8 March 1936 in the midst of a gloomy atmosphere.[235] It was presided over by the chief of Parlakimedi. The main grievance of the men assembled seemed to be against the people of Orissa who, according to them, had not led an agitation of the type that the situation had demanded and instead abandoned them to their fate. They referred to the new Orissa province which came into existence as a 'headless' state for its exclusion of Singhbhum, and appealed to the Oriyas to carryon the struggle to get back Singhbhum. The Oriyas still cherished the hope of receiving Singhbhum. The U.U.C. met in 1938 at Manjusa and prepared programmes to begin the agitation all over again in Midnapore and Singhbhum.[236] These were, however, all futile attempts.

Conclusion

In ultimate analysis, Singhbhum stands apart from Ganjam and Midnapore. As long as Singhbhum remained under Bengal, it had no real urge to fight for amalgamation. After the Bihar and Orissa province was created, Oriya Movement got a foothold here, which however was subdued because of the non co-operation of 1921. It was only when the cry for separate province for Orissa gathered intensity that the Oriya nationalist agitation was revitalised in Singhbhum.

Like Midnapore, Singhbhum too came in touch with the Oriya Congress leaders and gave its full support to the non-cooperation movement in the twenties. This was a self-defeating campaign on the part of the Congress 'missionaries' in Singhbhum for it not only took the steam out of the Oriya movement, it also gave time and scope to the opposition camp to organise the counter-move. It lost the sympathy of the Government too.

In retrospect, the most vital drawback on the part of the Oriya leaders appears to be their sense of euphoria with regard to the stand taken by the tribal population, more particularly the Hos. There is no doubt that the governmental reports always suggested

that there existed more similarities between the tribal and Oriyas than with any other people in Singhbhum[237] and even the leader of these people, Dolmanki also indicated his bias towards the Oriyas. But when the Oriya agitation was going on with various counter-currents flowing underneath, the Oriyas completely lost sight of the possibility that these tribal people who constituted a major force in support of their cause could tend towards the opposite camp and took their support for granted. Thus though Singhbhum had given a lead to the Oriyas in the beginning, once the tribal people decided to withdraw their support, the scale tipped against them. The Oriya agitation in Singhbhum reveals a passion and sincerity for the cause on the part of the Oriya leaders, but it indicates also a lack of foresight and absence of any well calculated plan.

Tail Piece

The irredentist struggle of the Oriyas did not end in total success. They could justify their claims on Ganjam and a few estates in the Central Provinces like Khariar and Padampur, but Singhbhum and Midnapore stayed away thus leaving a wound in the Oriya heart.

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91. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. I, part II, p. 370.
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93. *UD*, 2.1.1904.
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104. *ISC Report*, pp. 545-546.
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106. Das, Rabindra Nath, "Birendranath Sasmal", *Dictionary of National Biographies*, Ed. S.P. Sen, Vol. II, p. 84.
107. Das, N.N., op cit., pp. 84, 87-89.
108. Ibid., p. 89.
109. Ibid., p. 99.
110. Ibid., p. 100.
111. Ibid.
112. *SJ*., 28.10.1931.

113. In 1924, when Birendranath Sasmal claimed the post of Chief Executive Officer of Calcutta Corporation an untoward situation occurred. A newspaper reported that he was greeted with derogatory slogans because of his Oriya origin and his claim for the post was overruled (*SJ*, 23.9.1931, Das N.N., op. cit., p. 101).
114. Das, N.N., op. cit., p. 101.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid., p. 108
117. *UD*, 12.4.1930.
118. Ibid., 14.2.1931.
119. *SJ*, 11.2.1931.
120. *UD*, 14.2.1931.
121. Ibid., 21.2.1931.
122. Ibid., 28.2.1931.
123. Ibid., 14.3.1931.
124. *SJ*., 22.4.1931.
125. *UD*, 30.5.1931.
126. *SJ*, 20.5.1931.
127. Ibid., 1.7.1931.
128. *UD*, 25.7.1931.
129. *SJ*, 19.8.1931.
130. Ibid., 23.9.1931,
131. Ibid., 5.8.1931.
132. Ibid., 12.8.1931.
133. Ibid., 26.8.1931.
134. *PA*, 9.12.1931.
135. *SJ*, 30.9.1931.
136. Ibid., 23.9.1931.
137. Ibid., 26.8.1931.

It must however be mentioned in this context that the reported offer of the pro-Birendranath group could not be corroborated in the other newspapers of the time. This

could either indicate that the information was a closely guarded secret or that it did not emanate from an authentic source.

138. Das, N.N., op. cit., p. 102.
139. Ibid.
140. On 16th September 1931, the sentries fired shots at the un-armed prisoners in the Hijli jail, brutally killing two and seriously injuring twenty-two others.
141. *SJ*, 23.9.1931.
142. Ibid., 14.10.1931.
143. Ibid.
144. Ibid.
145. Ibid., 28.10.1931
146. Ibid., 26.8.1931
147. Ibid., 4.11.1931
148. Ibid., 11.11.1931
149. Ibid., 16.12.1931
150. Oriya Movement for South-West Midnapore, *Orissa Committee, Report* vol. II, Appendix 3, A(1), pp. 6-14.
151. Memorandum submitted to the Orissa Boundary Committee by anti-partition Committee, *Orissa Committee Report*, Appendix 3, B(i), pp. 119-126.
152. *Orissa Committee Report*, 1932, vol. I.
153. The Raja of Jhargram, Narasing Ugal Singh Dev had been married in the Mayurbhanj ruling family but adopted Bengali culture and language and identified himself as Bengali (*SJ*. 30.9.1931).
154. *Settlement Report of the Pargana Dhalbhlim (1906-1911).*
155. Sadangi, T., "Desamisrana O Singhbhum" (Amalgamation and Singhbhum), *Sahakara*, 6th issue, 12th part, 1339, Aswina, pp. 521-523.

156. Two Bachelors, op. cit., p. 85.
157. Ibid.
158. *Orissa Committee Report*, Appendix 3A (2).
159. Aitchison, C.U., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads,* vol. 1, p.137.
160. Two Bachelors, op cit., p. 85.
161. Mahtab, H.K., *Odisa Itihasa*, p. 307.
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164. Two Bachelors, op. cit., p. 86.
165. Ibid., pp. 86-87.
166. Aitchison, C.U., op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 136-137.
167. Patra, S.C., op. cit., p. 75.
168. Two Bachelors, op. cit., p. 334.
169. Ibid, p. 109.
170. *AA*, 26.6.1916.
171. Ibid.
172. *SJ*, 22.7.1931.
173. *AA*, 14.8.1916.
174. *SJ*, 22.7.1931.
175. Ibid.
176. Ibid.
177. *SH*, 14.9.1918.
178. *UD*, 17.11.1917.
179. Ibid.
180. *AA*, 22.9.1919.
181. Ibid.
182. Rath, R.N., *Late Utkalamani Pandit Gopabandhu Das,* p. 14.
183. Misra, G., *Arddha Satabdira Odissa, p. 199.*
184. Ibid., pp. 200-206.
185. Ibid.
186. *UD,* 1.3.1919.

187. Ibid.
188. *AA*, 1.9.1919.
189. *SJ*, 20.11.1920.
190. *AA*, 2.2.1920.
191. Ibid.
192. Ibid., 12.1.1920.
193. Rath, R.N., *Utkalamani.* P. 13.
194. *UD*, 17.11.1917.
195. *SJ*, 22.7.1931.
196. *Census India*, 1911, vol. V, pp. 58-59.
197. Ibid., 1921, vol. VII, p. 213.
198. Misra, G., op. cit., p. 205.
199. Ibid., p. 291.
200. *AA*, 17.1.1921.
201. Ibid.
202. *PA*, 25.3.1925.
203. Misra, G., p. cit., pp. 222.
204. Ibid., p. 223.
205. *PA*, 13.1.1926.
206. Misra, G., op. cit., p. 232.
207. *PA*., 25.3.1925.
208. Ibid., 13.1.1926.
209. Ibid., 24.11.1926.
210. Ibid.
211. *AA*., 17.3.1920.
212. Ibid.
213. *SJ*., 8.7.1931.
214. Ibid.
215. *UD*., 5.4.1930.
216. Ibid., 14.2.1931.
217. Ibid.
218. *SJ*., 29.7.1931.
219. Ibid.., 23.9.1931.
220. Ibid., 14.10.1931.
221. Ibid., 23.9.1931.

222. Ibid., 22.7.1931.
223. Ibid., 23.9.1931.
224. Ibid., 30.9.1931.
225. Ibid.
226. Ibid.
227. Ibid.
228. *PA.*,6.7.1931.
229. An attempt was made to have popular Oriya leader Iswar Chandra Hota arrested on false, cooked up charges. (*SJ*, 19.8.1931).
230. *AA.*, 1.2.1932.
231. Ibid., 15.2.1932.
232. One of them called Mansingh Pareya narrated before the Boundry Commission that the Oriyas apparently disliked them and would in all probability neglect them if they went to Orissa. He narrated how, while studying at Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, he was considered as an untouchable and was ostracised along with the other Ho students. They were not allowed to sit with other fellow students on the same dinning table; they were made to sit on the floor, sometimes in a Separate room and were served food always at the end of the queue. Many times they would even go to their examination hall without food because by the time the cook came to serve them, it would be too late for the examination. He went on to recount how they had complained to the Principal after which things improved slightly but they were still facing a good deal of humiliation (*AA.*, 21.11.1932).
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234. *AA*, 19.4.1933.
235. *Sahakara*, Jyestha,1343, 17th part, 2nd issue.
236. Acharya, K.C. "The duty towards Oriya dismembered tracts,"*Sahakara*,Asadha 1345, 19th 3rd issue, pp. 245-249.
237. *Orissa Committee Report* 1932, vol. I, pp 106-107.

CHAPTER VIII

AMALGAMATION AND SEPARATION: A DILEMMA FOR ORIYA NATIONALISM

It would be clear from the foregoing chapters that amalgamation of all the Oriya-speaking tracts, under one provincial administration was the initial goal of the Oriyas; the idea of a separate province for them, although mooted quite early, emerged as a strong force only in the later years. The two ideas were in perfect harmony with each other in the beginning but became conflicting currents when the threat loomed large that areas so dear to the heart of the Oriyas would remain outside the ambit of the proposed province. Thus, 'amalgamation'and 'separation' became watch-words for two rival sects of opinion leaving the common man completely baffled.

Amalgamation under any Province

Perhaps, the first recorded memorial for amalgamation was presented in 1876 to the Government by Baikunthanath De and Bichitrananda Das. It urged the Government to unite all the Oriya-speaking areas which included the coastal or the main Orissa, Midnapore, Singbbhum, Sambalpur and its tributary states and Ganjam under one single administration.[1] The various political and social organisations which sprouted in those years also expressed themselves in the same lines. Again, during the Sambalpur agitation, Commissioner Cook's proposal of 1895 supported, in principle, the amalgamation of Oriya-speaking tracts with the Orissa division. The noted memorial from Ganjam presented in 1902 to Curzon, also emphasised the union of Oriya territories under one province. Until the end of the 19th century, the Oriya movement pressed its demand for amalgamation and the Oriyas hardly gave any thought to the question of which province they would be put under, should their amalgamation become a success.

Amalgamation with Bengal as against with the Central Provinces

Towards the beginning of the 20th century, however, different views emerged as to which province Orissa would be attached to once it was united. 'Utkala Dipika', for example, desired the union of scattered Oriya tracts and favoured its placement under Bengal.[2] The idea of separation of Orissa as a province had not been given any consideration till then. When Raja Baikunthanath De of Balasore made a special representation around the same time to the Government of India for uniting all the Oriya-speaking tracts and placing them no matter whether under Madras, Bengal and Central Provinces, or a separate administration,[3] he was criticised by 'Utkala Dipika'. According to 'Utkala Dipika', if Orissa was to be amalgamated under any province it had to be Bengal and the extent of Oriya territory was not large enough to warrant the constitution of a separate administrative unit.[4] Subsequently, the Orissa Association in its memorial on 2 April 1903 requested the government:

"(i) to transfer to the Orissa Division, the Oriya-speaking portions of the districts of Ganjam, Vizagapatam, Sambalpur, Chotanagpur and Midnapore, so far as this can be done, having regard to territorial contiguity, or (ii) to raise the Orissa Division to a Chief Commissionership like that of Assam, retaining the judicial supervision of Honourable High Court of Calcutta, and the educational connection with the Calcutta University, whichever these measures is, in the opinion of the Government better calculated to secure the advancement of the race."[5]

However, the memorandum was quickly followed by a letter from the President of the Orissa Association, M.S. Das urging to attach the united Orissa with Bengal.[6] This move generated some controversy among the Oriyas. The controversy sharpened with the Government announcement in December 1903 to unite under a single administration (Bengal), the scattered sections of the Oriya-speaking population.[7]

Babu Sitanath Ray, Secretary, Bengal National Chamber of Commerce in his letter to the Government of Bengal, dated 3 February 1904, while supporting the move to unite Oriya-areas as contained in Curzon's recommendations wrote:

"It may be an advantage to the Orissa people themselves, and it appears some of them expressed a desire that the scattered units of the race, now placed under three different administrations, should be welded together and placed under one Commissioner, and the whole of Orissa bodily transferred to the Central Provinces, where as a whole by virtue of their preponderating number, they are sure to receive greater attention than they are said to do from the Government of Bengal."[8]

A booklet named 'Prarthana' (Prayer) was published from Puri which favoured the administration of Orissa either through the Central Provinces or as a Chief Commissionership.[9] An English newspaper from Calcutta published a letter that was signed by an 'Oriya' and suggested that the entire Orissa should be taken out of Bengal and be placed under the Central Provinces.[10] Gopabandhu Das in a letter to 'Utkala Dipika' dated 16 February 1904 said that "Orissa should be separated from Bengal, at least for the sake of Humanity if not for anything else."[11]

The group supporting the association with Bengal was equally vocal in its claim. 'Utkala Dipika' pointed out that Sambalpur had never shown any unwillingness to be attached to Bengal.[12] The same newspaper also published a letter by some 'trio' which stressed the fact that Bengal had brought much benefit to Orissa during the past hundred years.[13]

The controversy between the two groups became very acute in Cuttack when one group headed by M.S.Das favoured the link with Bengal and the other group including Padre Howell and Gokulananda Choudhury supported association with the Central Provinces. In 1904, Padre Howell sent one memorandum to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal urging him to place the united

Orissa under the Central Provinces.[14] M.S. Das retorted by pointing out that (i) the belief that if Orissa was associated with the Central Provinces she would be better off job wise was baseless since in the Central Provinces also an Oriya would have to compete with not only Hindi-speaking population, but with professionally well established Bengalis and Marathas. If Orissa remained with Bengal, it would at least receive some preference as a backward region. Further, (ii) the land tax was higher in the Central Provinces, (iii), the 40,000 Oriya workers working in Calcutta would feel homeless if Orissa went to Central Provinces, (iv) communication was bad between Orissa and the Central Provinces, (v) long association with Bengal had made the Oriyas well acquainted with its culture, and (vi) Bengal was the permanently settled zone under which the Oriya landlords and peasants would be better off than under the temporarily settled area of the Central Provinces.[15]

The above dispute, however, revealed that the Oriya movement had not yet put separate province as its avowed goal. The demand was for the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts and if at any time the idea for a Chief Commissionership was put forward it was a mere suggestion without any real force behind it. The group supporting the association with Bengal was pragmatic in its outlook since it realised that the association with a developed province would bring in many advantages to the backward region. The other group, however, was more emotional and wished to dissociate from Bengal because of the latter's domineering attitude earlier. The controversy subsided when in 1905 only Sambalpur was amalgamated with the Orissa Division under Bengal leaving the other Oriya speaking tracts to their earlier fate.

Controversy over the Association of Orissa with Bihar

The controversy once again cropped up, though with a slight variation and in a milder form, in 1912 when the province of

Bihar and Orissa was carved out of Bengal. This time, arguments arose whether Orissa should gain by its new association with Bihar or it would be of advantage if she went to Bengal again.

Newspaper like 'Asa' denounced the views of 'Star of Utkal' to the effect that Orissa desired to go back to Bengal; whatever collisions of interests there might have been between Bihar and Orissa they argued, it was distinctly to the advantage of Orissa to continue to remain with Bihar. "In the so called affinity of the Bengali with the Oriya lies the real danger to Orissa," wrote the editorial of 'Asa'.[16]

The new arrangement also led to a controversy in the House of Lords in England, on 21 and 22 February 1912.[17] Lord Curzon, once Viceroy of India who had advocated the union of Oriya-speaking people remarked, "this new province on the west of Bengal is a bundle of odds and ends which have been thrown together because you did not know what else to do with them...Take the Orissans, no one has paused to think what they want . . .They want the reunion of the Oriya-speaking people. They want to remain under Culcutta to which they have been attached so long."

Lord Crewe expressed grave doubts if the people of Orissa would prefer to stay with Bengal, and Lord MacDonnel of Swinford remarked:

"It is a mistake to fancy that greater similarity exists between Orissa and Bengal than between Orissa and Bihar. I have been in communication with the greatest linguistic and ethnological authority of India Dr. Grierson, and he tells me that the language of Orissa is more like the language of Bihar than Bengal."

In the midst of such division of opinion, the Oriya aspiration for amalgamation was gathering momentum. The Indian Patriot wrote, "divided between the Orissa Government and the Madras Government, but throbbing with the new impulse of

advancement, the Oriyas have, for long, been agitating for unity. The Oriyas do not want a province for themselves, but they want to be under one Government, and not under two Governments."[18]

Emergence of the Concept of a Separate Province

During the course of this amalgamation movement, the Oriyas learned of the Montague-Chelmsford Reform Committee, which was constituted by the British Government to probe into the question of granting more decentralisation in administration. Oriyas realised that such moves would bring more provincial autonomy and if they did not act in time for a separate province of their own they would continue to be oppressed by their co-inhabitants in the joint province who were at the helm of affairs. This attitude was strengthened by a Congress move which recommended the formation of linguistic divisions of provinces at its Calcutta session in April 1917. It was realised at this session that the linguistic provinces were an essential pre-requisite for real provincial autonomy.[19]

The Utkal Union Conference presented its demand to the Reform Committee in 1917 in the following manner:

(i)that the Oriya-speaking tracts should be brought together under one separate administration of the type which Bihar and Orissa now had or that,

(ii)if it be not feasible under the present circumstances to organise a separate administration for Oriya-speaking tracts the proposed united Orissa be placed under the Government of Bihar and Orissa for the present with a view that it may at a future time develop into a separate administration.[20]

The Montague-Chelmsford Reform Committee was impressed by the Oriya claims and not only did it give an opinion in favour of a redistribution of provinces on the popular consent but also indicated the necessity of making sub-provinces in Bihar and Orissa.[21]

Soon a new force came to operate in the Oriya movement. The people were no more satisfied with the desire of only amalgamating together and being tagged to another province. "If a distribution of provincial areas on the basis of language in the case of the Oriyas be not affected simultaneously with the Constitutional Reforms, the case of the community would be far from satisfactory, in as much as fresh forces of national disruption would be brought into play with the introduction or the Constitutional Reforms, if it be not balanced by a corresponding removal of the national grievance" reported the 'Utkal Hitaisini Samaj' of Parlakimedi on 16 January 1919 to the Southborough Reform Committee which had come to enquire about the implementation of the Montague-Chelmsford reform suggestions.[22] Newspapers started expressing the desire for a separate administration for the Oriyas.[23]

The Government, however, was not very much convinced by the Oriya demand for a separate province. On 25 November 1921, when a discussion about it was raised in the Bihar-Orissa Legislative Council, the Governor-in-Council pointed out that there was no unanimity among the Oriyas about their claim -- some asked for a separate province of their own, while others would favour amalgamation of Oriya-speaking tracts under one government. The question of forming a separate Oriya province had not been considered by the Government, he noted and until the opinion of the Oriya people outside the province be ascertained the matter could hardly be said to arise for consideration.[24]

This indicated that the Oriya claim for separation was yet to become unanimous and forceful. The amalgamation issue was still the most significant issue to the Oriya heart as well as to the outsiders. While giving evidence before the Philip-Duff Committee many of the local chiefs in Ganjam, who were the great protagonists of the Oriya cause, expressed their desire for

amalgamation but showed apprehension about the financial feasibility of having a separate administration.[25] Even a periodical in Orissa like 'Young Utkala' wrote about the demands of the Oriyas in the following manner:

i) Orissa wanted a separate minister for itself,
ii) Orissa wanted sub-province, and
iii) Orissa wanted amalgamation.

There was no argument and no claim for a separate province for Orissa and the newspaper 'Forward' in Culcutta remarked with irony that the young men in Orissa were satisfied with so little.[26]

However, subsequently, on 8 February 1927, Nilakantha Das moved a resolution in the Central Legislative Assembly in the following terms -- "This Assembly recommends to the Governor-General in-Council to be pleased to take immediate steps to put, or publish the schemes of putting, all Oriya-speaking tracts under one local administration."[27] He stated that nothing less than a separate province of their own would satisfy the Oriyas and that, if they were merely attached to one existing local government, the agitation would continue. The Home-Member replied that as a matter of 'practical politics', the idea of a separate administration must be rejected and that the question really to be decided was, what could be done in the way of smaller modifications.[28]

In spite of the summary rejection of the idea by the Government the move by Nilakantha created a stir in Orissa, for we find that immediately after, the movement for separation assumes intensity. 'Samaj' commented that in order to realise the Oriya claims, follow-up moves must be undertaken in each and every village in Orissa.[29] The Oriyas felt that they were being discriminated against in matter of jobs in the secretariat or in securing admission into the medical college. They also found it difficult to run to Patna for every trivial thing.[30] 'Samaj' again pointed out that "the separation of Orissa was the highest aim of

the Oriya amalgamation movement. The Oriyas must address themselves to the task of securing a separate province, but along with it the amalgamation movement should be allowed to proceed uninterruptedly and with intensity."[31]

The claim for separation got a fillip when the Simon Commission began its enquiry. Provincial committees were set up to assist the Commission in its enquiry, and the Bihar and Orissa Committee in its report pointed out:

"In a province with such meagre resources like Bihar, the partnership with Orissa which also does not possess superfluous wealth has not been fraught with happiest consequences. It is not proposed to offer the detailed suggestions for the creation of a separate Oriya province but the Committee is of the view that if the proposition is not utterly beyond practical adoption it should be undertaken without the slightest hesitation . . . Orissa is a separate entity by itself, with distinct culture, language and problems, and by being tacked on to the Bihar, it has neither benefited the senior partner nor realized its own aspirations."[32]

By the beginning of the thirties it became clear with the publication of the Simon Commission Report that the Government had agreed to the Oriya demand for separation, but in respect of amalgamation though they appreciated the unity of Oriya tracts they excluded many area claims, which according to them, were not justifiable.

Controversy regarding Amalgamation and Separation

In the Oriya All-Parties Conference on 22 May 1931 following the publication of the Simon Commission Report, Nilakantha Das pointed out that the two issues of Oriya movement, viz. amalgamation and separation should not be confused. He went further and stated that amalgamation was not needed without separation.[33]

On the contrary, at the 'Ganjam Oriya District Conference' Gopabandhu Choudhury said, "even though forming a separate

province would be a great help to us . . . the priority should be given to the other issue: what we lack is amalgamation."[34] Thus the two important and complementary aspects of Oriya nationalist movement became unfortunately controversial issues with regard to priority. The controversy sharpened with the publication of the Boundary Commission reports which, as we know left out many important areas earnestly claimed by the Oriyas for the proposed province of Orissa.

A letter was inserted in 'Utkala Dipika', which referred to the thought provoking issue before the public in Orissa --whether, or not they should accept a separate province where Singhbhum and Midnapore would not be associated with the new province. Referring to the announcement of the Secretary of State, Mr.Hoare, after the 3rd Round Table Conference that their measure would make one crore of Oriyas happy, the letter wryly pointed out that, "let alone one crore, even one single soul cannot derive any comfort from the announcement."[35]

A letter was written by one Banabehari Palit from Cuttack which said that the Oriyas were grateful for the Government announcement of separation.[36] The 'Orissa Landholders Association' also expressed its gratitude to the Government.[37] Another letter by an 'Oriya youth' entitled 'separate Orissa' was published that did not mince words to express the view that it would be frivolous to boycott the separate province on the ground that complete amalgamation was not effected.[38]

The conciliatory tone of the Leaders' Conference at Cuttack while expressing gratitude to the Government was criticised by many. Jadumani Mangaraj remarked that not anything short of a 'complete province' would be tenable.[39] One would thus observe that the controversy of 'amalgamation vis-à-vis separation' assumed a virulent form. Needless to say, the common man was baffled by the battle of words.

In an effort to logically analyse the situation, and present it to the public, S.N.Das inserted an article captioned, "Duty towards

separation and amalgamation", wherein the various shades of opinion prevalent in the province were classified as follows:

(i) Those who did not wish to have either amalgamation or separation,

(ii) Those who favoured amalgamation but do not like to have a separate province in view of the present administrative principles,

(iii)Those who favoured both amalgamation and separation. Under this category there could be further subdivisions:

(a)Separate province with any of the Oriya-speaking areas.

(b)Separate province to be formed with the areas as demarcated by the O'Donnell Boundary Committee.

(c) No separate province unless amalgamation of all the Oriya-speaking tracts including various regions of Singhbhum and Midnapore.

He pointed out that there were many vested interests in Orissa whose only ambition it was to go to the Council and become ministers and therefore they favoured the category iii (a). He supported the category iii(c) and explained that it would be no good accepting a separate province without the amalgamation of the desired areas.[40]

The announcement of the White Paper made the controversy still more biting when it excluded Jeypore and Parlakimedi from the proposed separate province of Orissa. 'Utkala Dipika' pointed out that whenever the Oriyas had pressed for a separate province they had naturally taken it for granted that the new identity would embrace all their brethren. The paper contended that being tacked on to any other province would not improve the situation either and therefore the Oriyas must adopt the strategy of accepting the separate province and continuing their intense agitation for the amalgamation. The same edition pointed out in another commentary, how the issue of coupling Orissa to another province had been reduced to a travesty. It said, "when Orissa stays with Bengal it cannot prosper, we cannot get back to Bihar also after

all the bad blood, we cannot even go to the Central Provinces since its finances are in shambles. In view of this, we should be tagged up with Andaman islands!"[41]

The lighter vein apart, these lines appropriately pointed to the helpless situation for Orissa and perhaps made an insinuation at the rigid stand taken by some section of the leaders that a separate province without their desired areas would not be acceptable at all. At a special session of the U.U.C. at Cuttack on 11February 1934 it was declared that if the demands of the Oriyas in respect of the boundary were not conceded then the new province would not be acceptable.[42] This move by the U.U.C. was promptly rejected by Niranjam Patnaik as a tactless and unwise decision.[43] An article was published under the caption, 'Utkal Amalgamation' which endorsed the view of the U.U.C. and imputed 'sinister designs' to the move of the people who supported first a separate province and then an extension of boundary.[44]

A letter published in 'Utkala Dipika' ridiculed the view of these leaders who, the author, claimed, would bother little if Puri went to Madras, Balasore to Bengal, and Sambalpur to the Central Provinces; they would only wish to have a separate province even if it meant only Cuttack, as that would extricate them from their plight in the Bihar and Orissa Council (the insinuation was ostensibly made to the Oriya members of the Bihar-Orissa Council who were completely inactive).[45]

Now the squabbling came very much to the surface and the popular sentiment showed a distinct crack down the length. Newspaper like 'Utkala Dipika', however, strove to bring back solidarity at the juncture and cautioned the nation that many other elements would exploit the situation. It quoted a news item to show how the Raja of Burdwan was already expressing himself against the creation of a separate province arguing that the timing chosen was inappropriate because the economy of the country was shattered following the earthquake.[46]

Conclusion

Fortunately for Orissa, the controversy, which threatened to bring further misery to this unfortunate region, was gradually pacified when the Joint Select Committee extended the Boundary of Orissa to include Jeypore and Parlakimedi and in 1935, the Government of India Act announced the formal creation of the separate province of Orissa.

The amalgamation school felt that the Oriya nationalism had succumbed to a compromise, which was as humiliating as it was tragic. The separatists however were happy, not because some areas were left out but they realised that perhaps nothing more could have been achieved under the circumstances. They were, however, never forgiven by the 'amalgamationists' and the rancour seemed to spill over to the future years too. Any hypothesis purely on an objective analysis would be rather difficult as the situation was no doubt intriguing. However, the facts revealed through the government reports would indicate that on the strength of the information that the Government had accumulated by then, a further extension of the boundary would have been difficult. In addition, since the All India Congress chose to take a side seat on the issue of boundaries of the new province, it was doubtful if the Congress leaders of Orissa, their strong opinions notwithstanding, could have done anything in the matter. Therefore it may be said that effectively the choice given to the Oriyas was just one -- whether or not to accept the separate province and it was perhaps wise that no further friction with the Government was invited at that moment.

References

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2. *UD.*, 24.1.1903, 31.1.1903.
3. Two Bachelors, op cit., p. 27.
4. *UD.*, 21.2.1903.

5. Two Bachelors, op. cit., pp. 27-28.
6. *UD*., 30.1.1904.
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CHAPTER IX

A PROVINCE IN TRANSITION

On 1 April 1936, on a Wednesday, the Province of Orissa was born comprising an area of 32,695 square miles with a population of 8,043,681. The territory was divided into six districts, viz. Cuttack, Puri, Balasore, Sambalpur, Ganjam and Koraput.

Expectedly, there was celebration and rejoicing all around in Orissa notwithstanding an undercurrent of frustration at the exclusion of some of the prized territories dear to them. There was hope lurking in every heart that eventually, these areas would be united with the Orissa province. It was also evident that the people at large reposed great faith on the leadership of Gajapati Krishnachandra Dev, the chief of Parlakimedi who enjoyed the stature as the true successor of Madhusudan and Gopabandhu. A scion of the Gajapatis of Orissa, Maharaja Krishnachandra played a significant role in the Oriya nationalist movement. His deep love for Orissa and the Oriya cause and the indomitable desire to get his estate integrated with Orissa even at the cost of leaving behind a large part of his territory with the Madras province was duly recognised by the Oriyas. The forty-four year old chief of Parlakimedi, recently bestowed with a Maharaja title by the British[1] was thus looked upon with admiration and reverence for carrying on the next phase of the Oriya amalgamation movement.[2]

Orissa's poet laureate and the woman leader Kuntala Kumari Sabat gave a clarion call on this red lettered day to the Oriyas for continuing their strong campaign for the inclusion of the rest of the Oriya lands. She offered a symbol, the title 'Birasri' to the Oriyas, both men and women that would enhance their pride and spur them on, into the next struggle with a new vigour.[3]

The well known leader from Singhbhum, Krushna Chandra Acharya prepared a comprehensive programme for Orissa

identifying their obligation towards the outlying Oriya speaking tracts.[4] He appreciated the resolutions adopted at the UUC at Manjusa at its 33rd session exhorting the youth from Orissa to go and work in the politically disintegrated Oriya speaking areas. Further, the formation of a 'Good Will Mission' was according to him quite important in strengthening the bond between the mainland Orissa and them, in the outlying areas.

Additionally, as Acharya pointed out, of all the outlying Oriya areas then, it was Singhbhum that was most active in the Oriya movement with the 'Singhbhum Utkala Sabha' holding regular sessions. Appeals to the government through this 'Sabha' had earned grants for the local Oriya schools and government jobs came to Oriyas from Singhbhum. He recommended for the establishment of similar associations in the other Oriya regions such as at Vizagpatam in Madras province and at Phuljhar in the Central provinces. He expressed his delight at the formation of the 'Manbhum Utkala Sabha' and its activities. Midnapore needed a serious attention from the Oriya leaders in Orissa to activate the Oriya movement. To him, the opening of the Oriya medium schools at all levels was of primary importance for the success of the amalgamation movement.

The new province faced several issues; many of which were formidable and were as serious as the movement for amalgamation. As the Orissa province came into being prior to the establishment of the provincial autonomy, an interim period of one year, i.e., until 1April 1937 was granted to enable the new unit to make preparations for self-administration before it assumed an autonomous status for administration. The Governor of Orissa and the Orissa Advisory Council[5] with members nominated by the Governor were in charge of looking after the administration in the year of transition. The Council met in its first session at the Municipal Council Hall at Puri on 8 May 1936 at 11am, presided by the Governor. Some of the important issues

discussed in the session included the site of the capital of the new province, about the temporary housing arrangements for the official transaction such as the secretariat, about the diverse tenancy and land laws and about the electoral rolls for the coming election.

Meanwhile, preparations for election to the Legislative Assembly had also begun. The provisions embodied in the 1935 Act directed that there was to be a 'Federation for India' comprising the Governor's provinces, the Chief Commissioner's provinces and the Indian states acceded to the Federation. In this scheme, the status granted to Orissa was that of a Governor's province. The Legislative Authority in the province was vested in the Crown represented by the Governor and in the Provincial Legislature. While in six Governor's provinces out of the eleven, the Legislature was to include two chambers, Orissa and the rest were to have a single camera, viz., the Legislative Assembly. The Constitution provided by the 1935 Act was denounced by the All India Congress as the 'Slave Constitution'; nevertheless, the Congress decided to participate in the election scheduled for January 1937.

In Orissa, a number of socio-political fraternities mushroomed who were keen to fight election too. The chief of Parlakimedi was making plans for an independent party.[6] Simultaneously, some members from the moderate camp from Cuttack and Ganjam with Mandhata Gorachand Patnaik as the Chairman and Brajasundar Das and Nikunja Kisore Das as members also announced the formation of a National party.[7] Some members from the Congress also had contemplated to form a new party and fight the elections from outside the fold of the Congress. Their plan was to include in their wing the peasants and the small zamindars allegedly exploited by the rich landlords.[8] However, despite all the initiative taken by the Congressmen such as Bichitrananda Das, Nityananda Kanungo and Bhagirathi Mahapatra there is no record to indicate that any such party contested the first election.[9] The main Congress

organisation in Orissa, on its part, started making serious preparations for the election.[10]

In early 1937, elections for the Provincial Assemblies took place all over India, as the Government of India Act of 1935 seemed to have secured to the people of India the possibility of assuming responsibility for administering the country.[11] In the Orissa State Legislative Assembly, the Congress won a majority with 36 seats out of the total of 60 (56 elected and 4 nominated).[12] However, the Congress refused to form the ministry in Orissa as well as in other provinces when a conflict with the Government cropped up over the discretionary power to be used by the provincial Governors.[13] Consequently 'interim ministries' were set up in provinces.[14] In Orissa the interim ministry was formed by the members from the moderate camp headed by the chief of Parlakimedi.[15] It was a minority ministry and was unsupported by the legislature, therefore, the Assembly was not called to session.[16]

Meanwhile, the squabbling within the Congress Party in Orissa between the Swarajists and the Gandhians continued.[17] Such factional disputes were not unique to the political arena of Orissa, they were inherited primarily from the Indian Congress. The breach between the factions however widened during the separation-amalgamation controversy. Nilakantha Das who headed the Swarajist group in Orissa was a respected member of the Congress Party. Nonetheless, he expressed himself on occasions on the pernicious effect of the Congress movement on the Oriya agitation. He said that he believed in fighting against the British through the constitutional power and had therefore entered the Legislative Assembly. In the issue connected with the Oriya movement, he was in favour of accepting the government award of a separate Orissa. This stand was criticised and some interpreted the same as his over-eagerness to get into the ministry even at the cost of the greater interest of Oriyas. On the other hand, the Gandhians led by Gopabandhu Choudhury were not

prepared for any compromise; any separation short of complete amalgamation would not be acceptable to them.

The Orissa Provincial Congress Committee held fresh election in February 1937 to have new office bearers with the intention of edging out the incumbent president Nilakantha. Since, Gopabandhu Choudhury, the only possible alternative to Nilakantha, had already dissociated himself from active politics,[18] Mahtab was elected as the president and Nabakrishna Choudhury from Cuttack and Nikunja Kisore Das from Soro were elected as joint secretaries.[19] The election was alleged to be irregular and a faction of Congress members from Cuttack, Puri and Ganjam quit the Committee in protest.[20] Nilakantha was a member of the Central Legislature and had not contested the provincial Legislature, for he was busy in organising the election campaign for the party in the province. He had hoped that as the president of the provincial Congress Committee and as the senior most and experienced Congress leader who was chosen by M.S. Das as his successor in Orissa[21] he would be the inevitable choice to head the ministry in the state. The plan was to contest for the seat in the Legislature to be vacated by one of his supporters.[22] However, Mahtab was impatient to get into the power struggle and head the ministry. The intervention of Rajendra Prasad deputed by the All India Congress averted the crisis in the Orissa Congress politics. Biswanath Das from Ganjam was selected as the leader to head the ministry.[23]

By July 1937, a compromise was reached between the Congress and the Government, following which in the eleven provinces, 'Congress ministries' were ready to take over the responsibility. In Orissa, the three months old 'interim ministry'[24] was replaced by Biswanath Das as the Chief Minister, called Prime Minister then. His ministry included Nityananda Kanungo and Bodhram Dubey. The Orissa Legislative Assembly saw its first session on 28 July in the premises of the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack.

The responsibility before this new ministry was enormous.[25] The province represented areas which had been exposed to varied systems relating to education, revenue, public works and so on. To work out a unified and successful administrative pattern from this and particularly when public expectation was high, was an uphill task.

The tendency towards a split in the Orissa Congress, however, was enhanced during this time by the decision of the All India Congress Working Committee in its session at Delhi, 15-22 March 1937, that, "in the event of any offices of ministers being accepted by Congressmen . . . such ministers should not continue to remain members of Congress Executive Committee. But they may retain membership of general bodies like the A.I.C.C. and P.C.C."[26] The Congress leaders in Orissa who were offered positions in the ministry, had to resign from the Congress offices under this plan and their places in the Congress Executive Committee were filled up by other people. This brought in a clear division between the Congress members. Those who constituted the Executive Committee were responsible for organisational work and they were free to criticise the ministerial wing. Nilakantha Das was chosen as the president of the Executive Committee. The organisational wing displayed its dissatisfaction on many occasions over the working of the ministry whose activities were, however restricted, for it was obliged to operate within the framework provided by the British verdict. During the visit of Gandhi and many other eminent Congress leaders in March 1938 the infighting between these two groups came to the surface.[27] A group headed by Godavaris Misra presented a list of allegation against the ruling ministry to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, member of the All India Congress Working Committee. Patel thought it necessary to do some reshuffling in the Orissa Congress Executive Committee and Nilakantha Das was replaced by Gopabandhu Choudhury as the president of the Committee.[28]

Soon after, the World War II broke out and the Congress ministry resigned in protest against the Indian participation in the war. The Swarajists in Orissa, however, did not support such a move by the Congress. Nilakantha Das propagated against the anti-war agitation of the Congress and therefore courted the displeasure of the Congress High Command. He was expelled from the party in 1941.[29] The Swarajists under the leadership of Godavaris defected and formed a coalition with the moderates who had formed the opposition party. A coalition ministry was formed in 1941 headed by the chief of Parlakimedi and continued during the war years till 1944, when most of the Gandhians spent their time behind the bars.[30]

In the meantime, the Gandhian faction of Congress in Orissa was looking for some scope to broaden its base; the opportunity came with peoples agitation in the princely states, towards the end of 1938. The chiefs and the landlords of these states constituted the majority of the moderate wing and they were the prominent unionists in the Oriya movement.

The followers of the Gandhian Congress on the other hand were still looked upon as the leaders who failed the Oriyas during their movement. Accordingly, the Congress organisation could not start on a very solid footing in the province. Their victory in the 1937 election did not reflect reconciliation in the public eye. Perhaps only the absence of any other political alternative and a lack of common premises to fight the Congress earned the latter the majority. However, the Gandhian leaders, be it in pursuance of their avowed policy of supporting a right cause or as a result of political manoeuvring to secure the confidence of the people in general, started mobilising popular support against the feudatory rule in the princely states.

In this phase of the Oriya movement it was the Socialist wing of the Congress with its commitment to the cause of the anti-feudalism that brought some credibility to the Orissa Congress.

The Oriya nationalism would now face new challenges with the onset of the movement for the integration of the twenty-six princely states that would lead to the formation of a greater Orissa. It would also draw the final curtain on the saga of the Oriya unification movement in the twentieth century.

After the merger of the states in 1948, the Orissa Assembly was reconstituted with 31 new representatives coming from these areas thus raising the total number in the Assembly to 91 and the number of representatives to the Central Legislatures 14.[31] This structural change, however, did not bring about any amity between the warring factions inside the Congress as also between the Congress Party as a whole and those opposing it.

However, the objectives of the Oriya movement were mostly fulfilled in spite of the conflicting groups. The Orissa University was formed, the Oriya language came to be used as the official language besides English. Orissa became a cultural and linguistic unit inside the greater Indian federation.

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CHAPTER X

FORMATION OF AN ENLARGED PROVINCE: MERGER OF THE ORISSA PRINCELY STATES

The formation of the Orissa province in 1936 established that the Oriya identity had the resilience to withstand the onslaughts over a wide period. The sense of rejuvenation created by the Oriya movement was not only confined to the administrative units of the newly created province or to the dismembered Oriya-speaking territories alone. It also did not end with the realisation of the provincial autonomy. The movement stirred up the imagination of the people living in the Orissa princely states as well. They responded adequately to the call of the Utkal Union Conference that was the representative body of the Oriyas living all over. Significantly, the passionate involvement of these people in a series of movements at diverse levels and under different circumstances proved crucial for the eventual success of the Oriya nationalism in the twentieth century.

Introduction

The twenty-six princely states of Orissa spread in an area of 28, 646 square miles in the northern, central and western terrain continued outside the administrative fold of the newly created Orissa province (see map, Appendix I). They remained directly under the British Paramount as a part of the princely India.

Positioned as they were in the heart of the Oriya-speaking region and sharing the geography, history, language, religions and most of the traditions of the mainland Orissa, it was indeed an irony that the Orissa princely states would be continuing with a separate political set up that essentially meant dividing the people and fragmenting the land. The need for their unification with the main stream was therefore felt for sometime. The issue was formally raised by B. Das in 1928 in the Indian Legislative Assembly.[1] Although the scheme was approved in principle by

the Simon Commission[2] it was kept in cold storage along with the entire princely India by the British Government as a part of their tactic to isolate the internal forces and keep the fight for freedom in check.

The close bond between the British and the princely states had turned the latter as the protégé of the British. In the Orissan context, it led to the emergence of a unique socio-economic situation in the princely states, eventually bringing them to a state of turbulence. The royalties preferred to cling increasingly to a world woven around the Rajput origin and drew on a divine right theory. In the process, many of them turned authoritarian, with the interest of the subjects far removed from their heart. Resistance of the subjects to these developments took place intermittently already beginning in the nineteenth century.

A more serious form of clash between the rulers and the ruled with external powers roped in, however became inevitable with the formation of the Orissa province. Meanwhile, the wind of socialism propagating through the radical wing of the Congress wafted slowly but surely to the common man in the princely states as well. The vast majority of the subjects of the island terrain under the monarchy now dreamt of their liberation by joining forces across the fence. The rulers of the princely states, in spite being the leading lights of the Oriya movement and staunch protagonists of Oriya nationalism, sensed a threat to their political identity with the coming of the popular government in Orissa.

The Oriya movement indeed assumed a different character in the princely states. It was primarily aimed at correcting the internal malady in the states created by the rulers. As the British protected the latter, every confrontation of the people with the state establishment therefore took on an anti-British stance. The people's opposition in the states however did not represent the same features of clash as were evident between the moderates and the extremists in the mainland Orissa. The movement in these

regions was directly influenced, supported and encouraged by the Congress.

The Congress had always sympathised with the popular cause that aimed at resisting the feudal repression. Now, as the ruling party in Orissa province it faced another issue with the separate political existence of the princely states as some of the districts of Orissa remained physically disconnected. The general thinking therefore was that, merger of the states with Orissa would not only remove this handicap, it would also bring about an integration and unity among a larger section of the Oriya-speaking populace, apart from boosting the economic strength of the fledgling new province through their rich mineral resources.

In addition, the ineffectiveness of the Oriya amalgamation movement in Midnapore, Singhbhum and some outlying pockets along the southern and western Orissa continued to haunt the Congress leaders in Orissa. They had been vociferous in favour of amalgamation of the Oriya tracts and against the separation of a shrunken Orissa. Yet they occupied the position of the ruling party in the new province that presented a pathetic picture of large-scale dismemberment of the Oriya-speaking territories. The dimension and quality of the efforts required to bridge the schism between their earlier pronouncement and the current reality was fully understood. At the same time, the care and attention that the new province demanded left the Congress with no option but to sweep the amalgamation issue under the carpet.

The leaders of the Congress therefore realised that their active role in the princely states should be to bring about a reform in the initial period and eventually for their merger with the Orissa province; this way they could prop up their sagging image in the Orissa politics. Additionally, the inhabitants in these states numbering 46,60,555 and thus accounting for more than half of the new province's population would not be a small base to be ignored for the party's political future. Further, for the Orissa

Congress this was also an opportunity to be identified with the all India issue of princely states, that too as a front-runner. The young radicals in the Orissa Congress, regardless of their appreciation for the subtler aspects of the political analysis immediately chose to plunge into a 'war of liberation' in the princely states, fired by the Marxist ideas of class war.

The British, meanwhile, continued with their avowed policy of supporting the state administration and sought to thwart the Congress led local movements in the princely states.

With the country about to attain its freedom in 1947, the princely states of India were advised by the British to choose one of the Dominions i.e. India or Pakistan, to merge, for the British Paramount would not be around to back them in their independent status. At this juncture the Orissa government initiated some decisive steps towards liquidating the princely order.

The rulers were however in no mood to give up easily their monarchical traditions and their independent identity; therefore, a stand off with the Orissa Congress unionists was inevitable. They mounted their efforts on several fronts in order to stay afloat and outside the provincial boundary; the most significant of them was the formation of the platform of the Eastern States Union.

The popular position in the states on the integration issue with Orissa went through changes with time and was also case specific. One could thus find votaries for the maintenance of the princely order with representative government. This way, Mayurbhanj remained outside the Orissa province for one whole year when the rest of the states merged in 1948.

Serailkella and Kharswan, with the tribal support, preferred to integrate with Bihar rather than Orissa in anticipation of a Jharkhand province to be carved out soon where their high profile political identity would possibly be maintained. The rulers of these two states who had engineered the transfer to Bihar in May

1948 soon realised that they had made a wrong choice. In an effort to correct the situation they appealed for the annulment of the union and expressed their desire to return to Orissa.

The All India Congress that had adopted an unaccommodating attitude towards the Oriya unification movement in the outlying tracts owing to the risk of a conflict with members from influential provinces on border issues, did not apprehend any such problem when it came to the Orissa princely states. Consequently, the Congress lent its undivided support to this phase of the Oriya union movement. However, as soon as a controversial situation with Bihar became evident relating to Seraikella and Kharswan, the All India Congress, now the ruling party in the independent India reverted to its original stand of appeasing the dominant province, in this case Bihar.

The integration of the princely states with the Orissa province in 1948-1949 marked the final stage of unification of Orissa in the 20th century. The surfacing of another wave of Oriya movement during the reopening of provincial border issues at the States Reorganisation Commission in 1953-1956 was in essence a non-starter as it brought about no change in the status quo. No Oriya-speaking territory returned to Orissa through the Government of India's proclaimed endeavour to reorganise the provincial boundaries on a rational linguistic basis. The formation of the Jharkhand Province carved out of the southern territories of Bihar on 15 November 2000 did create a glimmer of hope for the Oriyas. However, the political and popular moves for the return of the two former states of Seraikella and Kharswan did not go beyond the floors of the Legislative Assembly and a few isolated news papers articles that never gathered any momentum.

Making of the Princely States

The Hill States

The history of the origin and the early stages of evolution of the hill states of Orissa, which came to be known as Garjats/ Tributary

Mahals/Feudatory States/Princely States in the later years is not documented. It is traced in the myths, legends, prevailing traditions, religions, symbolism, available epigraphy, and the family chronicles of the ex-rulers, which are at times largely fabricated.[3]

As to the land and its people, the archaeological remains speak of the human habitation in these hilly forest stretches of land from the prehistoric times. The tribal people belonging to various ethnic categories and inhabiting these areas experienced the infiltration of outside non tribal groups in the later days who either converted the tribal chiefs in their village level settlements and formed the Hinduised states or subjugated them and founded their own states. In the beginning of the first millennium A.D. such state formation process started in the jungle country with the states usually building their forts taking advantage of the hills. Coming to be known as the jungle/hill states, these political entities were autonomous. They were however characterised by constantly shifting boundary lines depending on the emergence of the new states or the readjustment of the areas among the states themselves. Kulke writes, "There had been a continuous yet very slow process of Hinduization since the first millennium A.D. which radiated from the capitals of the Hinduized chiefs and rajas. This process, however, usually never transgressed the imaginary border lines which safeguarded the Hindu-tribal synthesis as the very basis of these early kingdoms."[4] The immigration of the non tribal groups into the forest hinterland in search of green pastures, however continued well into the future dates, under a range of circumstances. Simultaneously, the migration of diverse tribes from the neighbouring regions of Chotanagpur also took place. All these changed the demographic profile with an adverse socio-economic impact on the region.[5]

During the time of the Gajapati supremacy under the Suryavamsi rule in Orissa from 1434 to 1541 these hill states/ Garjats (born from the forts)[6] paid tributes and rendered feudal

services to the centralised authority yet maintaining their separate political existence. Gajapati rulers even created some of the smaller states in this jungle belt to accommodate their family members.[7]

Orissa remained independent until 1568 when it came under the Afghans and thereafter under the Mughals. The Mughals realised the hazards of the inaccessible hill regions and allowed sufficient independence to these hill chiefs numbering over a hundred in exchange for periodic revenues. Soon, however, most of the tiny and less influential chiefs were brought under the larger states as their fiefs[8]. The Marathas who had followed the Mughals to Orissa as the paramount power in 1751 divided the region into Mughalbandi, meaning thereby the coastal Orissa that had been completely subjugated by the Mughals under Akbar and the Garjats constituting the hill states. Such a division was continued by the successive British rule.

The British and the Hill States

(a) Early Phase

In the year 1803 the British took over from the Marathas, the land of Orissa including all the hill states/Garjats. A large number of these states were integrated with the Mughalbandi territories, some of them as permanently settled estates where British regulations would be applied. A number of states entered into treaty engagements with the British Government where a different kind of relationship would evolve. They would pay fixed annual tributes to the British and owe allegiance to the new power centre in exchange for autonomy in matters of internal administration. The freedom to rule, however, would not give the states sovereignty with absolute rights but as subordinate allies under the supreme authority of the British Government. Under this stipulation they were to provide a force to support the British when and if required by the latter. The initial status of the list of the states as included in the Mughalbandi territories and the ones

with the rights of the tributary states was not frozen. The flexibility in the arrangement continued until the year 1857 when new tributary states were formed, some of the tributary states also lost their rights and were annexed to the British territories. Besides, the twenty-six princely states of Orissa did not come under one administrative unit immediately with the British occupation. This happened in steps and was completed only as late as in1916.

The first group of the Orissa Garjats that entered into Treaty Engagements with the British as Tributary Mahals in 1804 were the following:

1. Angul
2. Athagarh
3. Athmallik
4. Banki
5. Baramba
6. Baud
7. Daspalla
8. Dhenkanal
9. Hindol
10. Keonjhar
11. Khandapara
12. Mayurbhanj
13. Narasinghpur
14. Nayagarh
15. Nilgiri
16. Pallahara
17. Ranpur
18. Talcher
19. Tigiria

The British chose the states to be their ally for strategic reasons. The support of these selected and powerful states was indispensable in order to combat their main threat, i.e., the Marathas, as well as to surmount the initial handicaps in the freshly conquered land. The economic interest played a significant role too in the selection of the circle of the allies. For example, the confidence of Sonepur and Baud was sought and gained because of their key location. Through them "the British Government would hold all the navigable ports of river Mahanadi

and would greatly facilitate the transit of cotton goods from Chatisgarh to Cuttack."[9]

The decision to align with the chiefs and to have a strong railing of friendly states around them was also partly influenced by the initial experience of the British in the forest territories surrounding Midnapore.

In the early stages of their Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the British had confronted the jungle chiefs in and around Midnapore which had caused much hardship for the Company. Even a small chiefdom like Dhalbhum of Singhbhum region could afford to resist and carry on a guerrilla war against the British for a decade. The fear of the unrest spreading to the neighbouring regions led the British to come to terms with the rebel chief and install him with much less revenue than what the Company had earlier fixed.[10] The difficulties the Company's force faced were due to the inaccessible hilly jungle tracts inhabited by the aborigines who were loyal to their chiefs and who could fight with their bows and arrows, practically remaining invisible and invincible, moving swiftly and changing their spots.[11] Though these numerous chiefs were subdued at the end, the British made a separate district for the jungle country, which needed special attention and called it the Jungle Mahals.[12]

The early hitches and the exposure to the jungle state culture thus went a long way in the formulation of the British policy towards the hill states in Orissa, which was essentially conciliatory in approach. Some of the notable chiefs of the land had often rebelled against the Marathas in the past and they subsequently supported the British to drive the Marathas away.[13] Such a coalition made it easier for the British to occupy the region, which they had been eyeing for sometime. It was believed that a liberal policy was likely to satisfy the pride of the hill chiefs, called rajas, and to forge an alliance with the British. Hence it was decided not to interfere with their internal affairs. By section 36 of the regulation

XII of 1805, the tributary mahals were exempted from the operation of the general regulation system introduced in the British Orissa.

Subsequently, however, the British thought it imperative to have supervisory control over the chiefs and thus in 1814 the office of the superintendent was created. The judge cum magistrate of Cuttack was entrusted with the duties as the superintendent of the tributary mahals. By the regulation of 1816 it was decided that the chiefs were to administer civil and criminal justice only under the control of the superintendent. The superintendent was vested with the authority to sit on judgement over claims to inheritance and succession. The magistrates of Cuttack and Puri acted as the ex-officio assistants to the superintendent. Subsequently, the superintendent was provided with an assistant, who exercised the full powers of a magistrate and who tried such cases as the former made over to him.

After assuming office, Impey, the first to discharge the responsibility of the superintendent suggested to introduce Bengal regulations into these territories in order to benefit the government and to civilise the inhabitants of these regions. In fact, all the successive officials, i.e. Stockwell, Rickett and Mills (1827-1840) as commissioner-cum-superintendent (after the Paik rebellion of 1817, the office of commissioner was established for the Orissa Division who was also made the superintendent of the tributary mahals) had maintained the same stand. According to these regional officials, the regulations would not hurt the prejudices of the chiefs and would yet benefit the people at large. The government, on the other hand feared that such a step would upset the apple cart as it was likely to interfere with the chiefs' age-old relationship with the peasantry and weaken their position. It would in the end lead to an undesirable scenario for the British, since a strong ruler as an ally would be of appreciable advantage to them.

However, stern measures were taken by the government when it was felt that atrocities were perpetrated by the states. For example, in 1839, Jagannath Srichandan, the chief of Banki was involved in several murder cases and he also was believed to have had criminal records in the past. He was imprisoned and his state, one of the nineteen tributary mahals was forfeited by the government the following year.

Soon after, Angul was found to be supporting the Baud rebels that rose against the British when the latter attempted to prevent widespread human sacrifice in the state. Angul was also found guilty of interfering with the administration of neighbouring states of Khandpara and Daspalla. The state of Angul even rose in an armed resistance against the British troops whereupon the chief, Somanath Singh was arrested. Soon, the last raja of Angul, Somnath Singh (1814-1853), a fierce warrior and a poet endowed with a deep intellect, who wrote 'Sangita Mala O Chaupadi'[14] was taken to the Hazaribag jail for life imprisonment. Angul was annexed to the British territories in 1847.[15] With this the tributary mahals were reduced to seventeen in number.

The tributary mahals of Orissa did not join the Mutiny of 1857 against the British. To the contrary, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar came to their aid, which pleased the British. Honours and titles were conferred on them. The British now chose to adopt a soft attitude towards the states with the intention of renewing a closer bond as a bulwark against possible future developments.

Thus, when the Queen's proclamation of 1 November 1858 announced the transfer of East India Company's possession to the Crown, it pledged in addition, to 'respect the rights, dignity and honour of the native princes as our own.'[16] The government decided not to annex these territories to the British territories any longer. As the next forward policy, the princes of the states as the upholders of the dynastic rule were given, by the *sanad* in 1862, the right of adoption. Copland writes, "While in British India

provinces were created and carved up, the borders of the states stayed frozen in their post-Mutiny mould. No wonder the princes in later years came to look back upon the Canningite settlement as their Magna Charta."[17]

In 1876, Queen Victoria assumed the title of the Empress of India. In the same year, in a 'durbar' held at Cuttack, on November 25, 1876, Sir Richard Temple, the Lt. Governor conferred on the chiefs the hereditary title of 'raja' and as such bargained for their permanent loyalty.

Interestingly, however, the chiefs of these states were always 'rajas' before the British came and some of them became 'maharajas' depending on the extent of the British favours. Ironically, these rajas and maharajas came to be referred not as the kings but only as the princes by the English and their kingdoms as princely states. This was apparently so since in British India there could be no king or queen other than the one of the British empire who lived in London.

There were also several rajas and maharajas in the numerous permanently settled estates in the British Orissa and such titles continued to be conferred on the landlords until the last days of the British rule. They were, however, not princes of the princely states and did not enjoy their rights and privileges.

(b) Making of the Twenty-Six Princely States

In 1888, Calcutta High Court gave a ruling that the seventeen tributary mahals of Orissa did not form a part of British India. As a result of this decision, new *sanads* were given to all the chiefs, which declared them rulers, defining their status, powers and position. Lord Elgin issued such *sanads* from Simla on 27 October 1894 that redesignated the tributary states as 'feudatory states'. Consequently, a Feudatory States Manual[18] was prepared that defined the lines of policy for the rulers to follow for efficient administration. It also articulated the relationship of the states with the British Government.

In 1905 the Sambalpur group of the Oriya-speaking states that included Bonai and Gangpur from Chotanagpur and Bamra (Bamanda), Kalahandi, Patna (Bolangir-Patna), Redhakhol and Sonepur from the Chatisgarh Division of the Central Provinces was added to the Orissa group of seventeen states. In the Singhbum group, Kharswan state was dependent on Seraikella and had no political status on its own. In 1818 the British took the initiative to free Kharswan from its dependence on Seraikella. In 1825, the Seraikella state was asked not to interfere with the internal decisions of Kharswan.[19] In 1916, Seraikella and Kharswan, the two Oriya-speaking states were transferred from Chotanagpur and included in the Orissa group. Thus the Orissa states became 26 in number.

Prior to 1906 all the states were directly under the administrative control of their respective commissioners. In 1906, the post of the political agent, Orissa feudatory states, was created with his office at Sambalpur under the commissioner of Orissa as the superintendent of the Orissa feudatory states. On 1 April 1922, the commissioner of Orissa Division, ceased to have jurisdiction over the states. The political agent was now designated as the political agent and commissioner of Orissa feudatory states. He was assisted in his administration by the assistant political agent.

On 1 April 1933, the Eastern States Agency was established comprising 26 Orissa states and 14 other states from the Central Provinces. They had been transferred as per the recommendations of the Butler Committee of 1929 from the provincial control to the direct control of the Central Government. The Governor-General, then known as the Crown Representative, exercised his control over these states through the agent to the Governor-General, stationed at Ranchi. There were two political agents under the agent to the Governor-General; one for the 26 Orissa states with headquarters at Sambalpur and the other for the 14 Central

Provinces states with headquarters at Raipur. Subsequently, two more states, Tripura and Cooch-Bihar of Bengal were added to the Eastern States Agency. The designation of the agent to the Governor-General was also changed to resident and the headquarters were transferred from Ranchi to Calcutta.

(c) The Administrative Fragmentation

In 1936, the Eastern States Agency was further split up into three different agencies under the same resident, known as Bengal States Agency, Orissa States Agency and Chatisgarh States Agency. The Orissa States Agency represented only 23 out of 26 Oriya speaking states. Mayurbhanj was included in the Bengal States Agency, while Kalahandi and Patna were under the Chatisgarh States Agency. The rearrangements were to facilitate the federal scheme promulgated in the Act of 1935.

It is the irony of circumstances that when the Orissa province was formed after long years of struggle, not only did a large number of the Oriya-speaking areas not return to the province but the Oriya-speaking princely states were also further fragmented into three different provincial groups.

In 1936 the twenty-six Orissa princely states under the Eastern States Agency with the subgroups included the following:

Athagarah	Daspalla	Khandpara
Athmallik	Dhenkanal	Kharswan
Baramba	Gangpur	Mayurbhanj (Bengal States Agency)
Bamra	Hindol	Narasinghpur
Baud	Kalahandi (Chhatisgarh States Agency)	
Nayagarh		
Bonai	Keonjhar	Nilgiri
Pallahara		
Patna (Chhatisgarh States Agency)		

Ranpur
Redhakhol
Talcher
Tigiria
Sonepur
Seraikella

In 1937, by granting new *sanads*, the status of the different states were redefined with the sole objective of removing the various inequalities, mainly arising from their grouping and regrouping under different administrative units. They were divided into A, B and C classes.[20] The new *sanads* recognised the ruling chiefs of the Orissa and Chatisgarh states as autonomous rulers of their own principalities.

In final analysis one observed that, the provincial autonomy in Orissa that expected a liberal government in the Orissa states instead saw the increasing power of the monarchy bestowed by the British Government.

The Rulers and the Ruled: A Snapshot in the Princely States

The form of government in the Orissa princely states during the time of the British hegemony was autocratic. There was no code of conduct binding on the rulers, the latter turned out to be despotic or benevolent depending upon their personal disposition. There was no independent judiciary for the common people to seek justice from. The 'durbar' (council) of the ruler held the entire judiciary, executive and legislative power without any scope of popular participation. No free press was there to articulate and air the grievance and voice of the people. The scenario was that of a typical mediaeval monarchical order where democratic ideas had hardly made any ingress.

People by and large subsisted on agriculture and forest product; the peasant had no law to protect him. His rights over the land was fragile, rents were higher than that prevalent in the Orissa province and were not standardised. In some states they were

paid in kind. Though the local ethnic people opted for this practice,[21] corruption was rampant in weights and measures; this helped fill the coffers of the middlemen at the cost of the cultivators and the royal treasury. There was no written law for remission of arrears. Things even worsened as the rents started going up when the paddy price fell by 50% during the depression years of the thirties.[22] A default in payment of this resulted in the confiscation of the land. Landless and homeless, many had to flee to the distant land of tea gardens or the industrial towns as daily wage earners. As expected, the rulers did not bother to bring in any administrative code based on a scientific principle for land assessment and revenue.

Prior to 1905, there were no systematic survey and settlement of land in any of the states. Even in 1905, the survey was not foolproof, for vast areas in the hinterland occupied by the tribal people and practising shifting cultivation were not assessed.[23] In such cases eye estimation or an approximate measurement by a pole was in vogue; it was not only inaccurate it used to be manipulated against the cultivators. The period of revenue settlement in these states was neither permanent nor was it for any specific long period, e.g. thirty years. Usually it varied from seven to twenty years that gave the rulers the scope to enhance the rents frequently.

The rulers themselves also needed a huge sum to meet their own expenses and consequently designed the structure so as to extract ever increasing revenue from their subjects. They had to maintain a large royal retinue under the grant called 'kharposh'. The'debottara' endowment implied the upkeep of the state and village deities, as well as making generous contributions at times towards the temple of Lord Jagannath and donation to variety of institutions. They were also expected to support the Brahmins under 'brahmottar'. A large number of people were engaged in providing multiple services for the ruling families. To meet all

these expenses vast land areas were set aside as rent-free lands which considerably reduced the royal income.[24]

The rulers sometimes conceived innovative plans for generating the finances through new tax burden and therefore added to the misery of the subjects. Apart from the revenue on land, there were numerous other taxes, 'salamis', fees, levies and monopolies. Tax on salt, 'bidi', tobacco, 'pan', coconut, coir, meat and many other articles and necessaries of life through monopoly, special fees for permitting use of double plank doors, use of any head dress, use of palanquin, grazing fee, fee for adoption, education cess were some of the examples that put enormous pressure on the poor peasantry.

Additionally, social abuses including the notorious forced labour practice known as 'bethi', arbitrary seizure of private property, curtailment of personal freedom including interception of letters were rampant.[25]Economically exploited, sense of security destroyed and politically isolated, the common people in these states lived a miserable life of total alienation from the modern day civilisation.

The backdrop described above was not the creation of the rulers alone; the set up was designed to a large extent by the British Paramount. The elevation of the status of the rulers after the Mutiny years of 1857 changed their lifestyle making it more ostentatious in order to be worthy of the attention of the British Crown. It required even more resources, which were forced ruthlessly from the people. In addition, the hereditary rights of the rulers granted by the British made them turn a deaf ear to the genuine grievance of the masses. Lord Curzon's remark that the princes ruled their states 'merely as agents of the British crown' might have been humiliating for the rulers, but the right to represent was passionately pursued to make the regalia dazzle even further.

The bureaucrats appointed in the states by the government acted as the princely shields against the people's demands. The shifting of the states' administration from the provincial authorities to the centre after the Butler committee recommendation brought in a new alignment between the princes and the British, which pushed the regional issues even further. Besides, the formation of the all India body of the princes such as the Chamber of Princes, special educational institutions for the sons of the royalty all contributed to the alienation of the princely world from that of the mundane. It was therefore inevitable that the people would rise in resentment.

The autocratic administration, however, had its variations in different states at different times. For example, state such as Dhenkanal, "had a progressive intellectual chief by the name of Maharaja Bhagiratha Mahendra Bahadur who ruled until 1877. He took pioneering steps for the spread of education as well as of the Oriya language and culture, founded English and Sanskrit schools, opened free medicine centres, renovated the main road and constructed one of the largest ponds of the state. He was a regular visitor to the Orissa Printing Company at Cuttack and supported the press that brought out the first Oriya weekly, 'Utkala Dipika'."[26] He was a creative poet and composed 'Sangita Sagar' as also many devotional lyrics, the 'Bhajans'. He had founded a trust to support the needy writers.[27]

By the second decade of the twentieth century, however, Dhenkanal was exposed to be practising a ruthless, primitive administration where the suffering of the subjects was immeasurable. Inhuman treatments like flogging, oppression by the state police and detention without trial were frequent.[28]

In contrast to the situation prevalent in Dhenkanal, Mayurbhanj experienced during this period, a benevolent and liberal administration. Continuing his enlightened rule the Mayurbhanj chief established high schools, had a high court that appointed

retired judges from high court and sessions court in the British India and ensured association with the eminent people of the time. Thus, M.S. Das was for sometime the political advisor to the Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo. On his request Gopabandhu Das joined as the government advocate in the Mayurbhanj state in 1911. The administration, however, was wholly centralised and the officers could be hired and fired at the sweet will of the chief. [29]

Early Resistance

The numerous uprisings in the nineteenth century that one witnessed in various states were manifestations of a deep sense of dissatisfaction with and resentment against the feudal rule and the deteriorating relationship between the chiefs and their subjects. The latter could no more accept the self-centred rulers as their saviours during personal nor social crisis.The British being the chief architect of the new form of the medieval monarchical set up planted the Indian officials as ministers/dewans and assistants to the superintendents. The confidence of the common people in these new middlemen was conspicuous by its absence. Thus the suppression of the 'Keonjhar Meli' of 1891 in which the strategy of Phakirmohan Senapati, then dewan, had a hand,[30] is looked upon today as a betrayal of the popular and a liberal cause. The 'Keonjhar Meli' led by Dharanidhar Bhuyan was the most intense of the nineteenth century uprisings against the feudal rule in Orissa threatening the law and order situation in the state. At this time, the state of Seraikella was of great support to the British in supplying men, materials as well as in providing horses and elephants for the army that the government required in order to quell the rebellion in Keonjhar.[31]

Some of the significant uprisings in the states in the nineteenth century included, Keonjhar (1863 and 1891), Nilgiri (1875), Mayurbhanj (1866), Kalahandi (1882) and Daspalla (1890).

These uprisings were mostly aimed at seeking relief from the immediate socio-economic exploitation; no long term ambition or any permanent solution (e.g. installing a welfare government) seemed to appear in the agenda. However, occasionally local politics did come into these agitations. For example, even though economic reason was at the forefront in the 'Keonjhar/ Dharanidhar meli', it culminated into a plan for the removal of the incumbent ruler in favour of a new leader from the Bhuyan tribe that formed the majority in Keonjhar. Though limited and local in scope, such uprisings did have a deep impact on the common people and the influence also spilled over to the next century.

The insurgency was in full flow through the first three decades of the twentieth century and the issues were wide ranging from the enhancement of rent, unfair feudal services, intervention of middlemen in choosing the heir to the recruitment in the army during the World War I. One witnessed such occurrences in a number of states including Bamra (1908-1912), Daspalla (1914), Mayurbhanj (1917), Dhenkanal (1922), Talcher (1914, 1922) and Nilgiri (1928).[32]

The initial thirty years of the twentieth century witnessed sweeping changes in the international and the national scene. On the national front Gandhi arrived with new messages that completely overhauled the Indian political outlook. The Congress in its desire to mobilise the masses evinced keen interest in the princely states at its session of 1920. However, no direct action or intervention had been initiated yet in the states. Kanika, the permanently settled estate in the British Orissa, experienced the first Congress supported agitation against the feudal repression in the twenties.

In 1924 when the UUC under the Congress dominance held its session of the Provincial Utkal Sammilani at Cuttack, decisions were made to make formal appeals to the rulers for improving their administration.[33]

The large number of the tribal people that had gone to fight in the War was not influenced by the Wilson concept of self-determination nor had the Congress activities in Kanika held any relevance for them. The Provincial Utkal Union Conference's vociferous discussion on the prevalent situation evoked no response from the rulers either.

Nevertheless, people in the states including a small number from the tribal groups were now receiving formal education; some of them were also being exposed to the winds of change outside their territories. It was from amongst these local people that a handful of leaders emerged initiating some form of agitation. They could not, however, stand up for long against the rulers; there was no common platform to galvanise the masses. Wherever any attempt was made for raising social organisations, such as the peasant association in Talcher, called 'Sobhagya Samity' of 1925,[34] it was nullified by the 'durbar'. There was no comprehensive programme or a strong leader to take the grievances of people to the government. The handful of leaders that were there, were silenced through repressive measures or they had to live in exile. Gobinda Chandra Misra, the firebrand agitator from Daspalla, had to flee Orissa in 1914-15 and go underground in order to escape the British warrant. During this period he lived for sometime at Santiniketan coming in close contact with Tagore and subsequently remained with Gopabandhu at Sakshigopal. With a recommendation from C.F. Andrews, he stayed in the Gandhi Ashram for a long period. He was to become a high profile Congress worker later and was the first Oriya to be closely associated with Gandhi.[35] Mahtab's efforts at Nilgiri in the late twenties to subdue the ruler even through the interference of C.F. Andrews had only temporary effects.

Thus, the early phase of resistance remained confined basically to the people with isolated agitations. They invariably ended in brutal repression by the state police, occasionally aided by the

contingent of British forces brought either from the neighbouring states or the British Orissa.

The Orissa States Peoples' Conference

The Garjat Praja Sammilani

By the twenties it was realised that without a mass based platform in the country, it would be futile to hope for any change in the 'durbar' policy. Such a feeling was further accentuated with the launching of the Chamber of Princes, which came into being during 9-10 February 1921 at the Red Fort. The congregation was held with a great deal of fanfare and splash. For the function the guests of honour were the Viceroy Chelmsford and the Duke of Cannaught, representing the King-Emperor.[36]

However, serious attempts were made to voice issues relating to the people of the states at a separate body during the Congress sessions. By 1927 both in Bombay and Madras two independent organisations for the people of the states were formed. At the Karachi Congress in 1931, it was decided in the presence of Gandhi that both these organisations would hold session jointly as a single centralised body. It was, however the Bombay organisation that continued as the all India body.

Lakshminarayan Sahu wrote that the third session of the States Peoples' Conference held at Bombay during June 9-11, 1931, was attended by him and Sarat Chandra Das of Mayurbhanj as delegates along with Bipin Bihari Choudhury from Cuttack as the observer.[37]

Around the same time, a group of young Oriyas formed a small organisation called the 'Garjat Praja Sammilani.'[38] They included Govind Chandra Misra from Daspalla, Radhanath Rath from Athagarh, Balukeswar Acharya from Hindol, Madhusudan Patnaik from Tigiria. The first meeting of the 'Garjat Praja Sammilani' was convened on 20 June 1931 at Cuttack.

It was intended to make the 'Garjat Praja Sammilani' a pan-Orissa organisation that would provide the prime platform for

discussing the issues pertaining to the welfare of the states' people and draft future course of action. The structure was to incorporate as members both the rulers and the subjects of the states. The membership was also open to persons of all groups in the British territory of the Orissa province. Merger of the states with the Orissa province did not figure as its stated goal.

The inaugural session was presided over by Bhubanananda Das, a brilliant legislator from Orissa. Known as B. Das in Orissa, he joined active politics when the issue of entry into the Council was considered by the Congress. He was a member of the Indian Legislative Assembly since the election of 1923. B.Das was one of the earliest voices from Orissa in 1928 suggesting the merger of the states and took a leading role in the debates in the Central Legislature on issues relating to the princely states.[39] He had by then also emerged as a prominent leader of the Oriya movement.

The 'Garjat Praja Sammilani' meeting was well attended, with representatives coming from most of the states. The rulers however did not show up; instead there were attempts by them to thwart the convention.[40]

At this meeting, resolutions seeking to convert the states into welfare states were passed. It was also decided that such changes as were identified, would be brought about by negotiations between the rulers and the subjects. A working committee was constituted with Brajasundar Das as the president, and Balukeswar Acharya as the secretary-cum-treasurer.[41]

The founder organisers were committed to the cause of Oriya nationalism. At the same time, a large number of them were also active Congress workers. In the mid-1931 when the congregation was convened, it was perhaps the springtime of cordial relations between the moderates and the extremists in the Orissa politics. The Civil Disobedience had been called off. At the Karachi Congress it had been decided to hold the next All India Congress session at Puri. The Parlakhimedi chief had presented the 'Oriya

Problem' at the first Round Table Conference which was appreciated by the Oriyas all over. It was a very encouraging atmosphere for the Oriya leaders from both camps and they decided to take a united stand in relation to the issues pertaining to the Oriyas. It was also thought appropriate to get into the issues in the princely states. The Garjat Praja Sammilani therefore appeared to epitomise a spirit of unity amongst Oriya leaders.

While everything appeared in the right place for the organisation to go forward with its ambitious plan, one did not hear much about the activities following the convention. The journal 'Sahakara' lamented the situation saying that beyond holding its first session at Cuttack, the 'Garjat Praja Sammilani' did not make much headway.[42]

The reasons for the inaction appeared to be manifold.

The announcement of the Boundary Commission's enquiry forced the Oriya leaders engrossed in the campaigning work amongst the Oriyas in the outlying areas leaving little time and space for the agenda of Garjat Praja Sammilani. Further, the Congress session scheduled at Puri had to be called off thus frustrating the founders of the organisation who had expected to receive the backing of the all India leaders. Finally, the Civil Disobedience movement that followed immediately not only kept the leaders tied up, many of them found themselves behind bars as well.

Garjat Praja Sammilani Becomes Orissa States Peoples' Conference

In the mid-thirties, following the period of the Civil Disobedience, a few key socio-political events took place in the country and in the main land Orissa, the impact of which was felt strongly in the princely states.

The 'Utkal Samyavadi Karmi Sangha' was established in 1933 in Orissa with the initiative of Nabakrishna Choudhury, Malati Choudhury, Gaurchandra Das, Gouranga Charan Das, Sudhir Chandra Ghose, Nrupen Sen, Manmohan Choudhury and

Surendra Nath Dwivedi to bring about socio-economic revolutions in the society.[43] The radical wing of the Congress headed by the young Jawaharlal established the Socialist Workers' Organisation in 1934 that aimed at creating a thrust to the mass movement in the countryside.[44] The Orissa wing of the Congress Socialist organisation was launched in 1935. The Orissa Congress also formed the provincial unit of the All India Peasants' Conference in 1935.[45] These organisations while championing the cause of the peasants strongly advocated the abolition of the zamindary system. This spurred a wide-scale peasant movement all over the British Orissa.[46] The agitation in Orissa also triggered a noticeable stir among the peasants in the states who were seething with discontent.

The formation of the separate Orissa Province in 1936 also created a good deal of excitement in the princely states. The election campaign in the province of Orissa involving leaders from the states and the majority win of the Congress Party had an electrifying effect on the people of the states.

On the all India level, the States Peoples' Conference that could not meet regularly on previous occasions was revived in 1936 when Pattabhi Sitaramaya evinced a keen interest in the states and became the president of the Conference.

These developments encouraged fresh attempts for rejuvenating the 'Garjat Praja Sammilani'. During 23-24 June 1937 the second meeting was held at Cuttack. Pattabhi Sitaramaya, the president of the All India States Peoples' Conference presided over the meeting and christened it as Orissa States Peoples' Conference.[47]

This session, if it caused the excitement among the people of the states, it also cautioned the chiefs. They attempted to prevent their subjects from attending the session and were largely successful. Only six states with around one hundred people could be represented.

The aims and objectives of the Orissa States Peoples' Conference (OSPC) were clearly spelt out and consolidated in the session. The aims were to establish a closer social relationship among the subjects of the different Orissa princely states, to bring about cooperation in the field of education, industry and administration and to put forth the grievances of the people before the rulers by mobilising public opinion.

The numerous resolutions passed in the conference included the introduction of the codified laws, granting the subjects their fundamental rights as also the rights of occupancy on their holdings and the abolition of all feudal services. Demands were also made for more of legislative power with elected members' involvement in the budget for the states, in the privy purse for the royalty; and the separation of the judiciary from the executive.

A Committee of Enquiry was formed to investigate into cases of repression and irregularities prevalent in the states and to suggest the remedial measures. The members included Satis Chandra Bose, Brajasundar Das, Balbant Rai Mehta; Sarangadhar Das from Dhenkanal, the sugar technologist (the secretary of the OSPC) was made the convener of the committee.

The working committee of the Orissa States Peoples' Conference, in its meeting on 6 June 1938 reconstituted the group because of the non-availability of two of its members due to personal reasons. The new committee included H.K. Mahtab, Lalmohan Patnaik, Balbantrai Mehta; H.K. Mahtab was elected chairman of the committee on 20 June 1938.

The working committee of the conference comprised the following members:

President- P. Sitaramaya

Secretary-Sarangadhar Das (Dhenkanal)

Treasurer- B.Rath (Nayagarh)

Members- Lalmohan Pati (Mayurbhanj), Balukeswa Acharya (Hindol), Radhanath Rath(Athagarh), H.Patnaik (Dhenkanal),

Govinda ChandraMisra (Daspalla), M.Mohanty(Athagarh), M. Patnaik(Tigiria) and Gangadhar Misra (Ranpur).

The composition of the Orissa States Peoples' Conference clearly indicated the cooperation between the emerging leaders from the states and the Congress leaders from Orissa, some of the states leaders themselves being the active members of the Orissa Congress. The all Orissa body for the states people, however, had its headquarters at Cuttack, for the rulers would not allow it within their territories. The organisation had to operate from outside until it branched out into the local bodies of Praja Mandals where residents of the states above eighteen years of age were eligible for the membership. Affiliated to the Indian States Peoples' Conference, the all Orissa body was now ready to plunge into action defending the rights of the people of the states.

The Unrest, 1938-1939

'Garjat Andolana'

In the thirties of the twentieth century the Orissa political scene was going through changes stimulated by a range of socio-economic factors. Until the mid-thirties it was the Oriya movement leading to the formation of the province that occupied the mind of the people, simultaneously from the thirties onwards it was the peasant unrest, the Garjart agitation and the socialist movement under the Congress umbrella that became the main axis of the Orissa politics. The changed focus witnessed the emergence of many new leaders.

Of all the leaders who played significant roles in the 'Garjat Andolan', Harekrishna Mahtab emerged as a key figure. A member of the All India Kissan Congress Working Committee, a member of the All India Congress Working Committee and a Gandhian Congress worker, Mahtab took an active role in providing directions to the states peoples' agitation culminating in the ultimate integration of the states in the year 1948-49 when he was heading the ministry in Orissa.

Next to Mahtab in playing an important role in deciding the fate of the states was Nabakrishna Choudhury, one of the founder members of the socialist wing in the National Congress. In order to affirm his faith in the cause he was fighting for, he surrendered his right to the vast ancestral landed property and contributed the entire income from his farm at Tarikund. His wife, Malati Choudhury who also subscribed to the same ideology and was an active worker, gave away all her ornaments. From this fund was launched the weekly, 'Sarathi' with the headlines, 'workers of the world unite'. 'Sarathi' soon became the mouthpiece for the socialists in Orissa.

Nabakrishna was one of the foremost leaders of the peasant movement in Orissa and figured prominently in the All India Peasants Conference. To uphold the cause of the peasants, he founded the journal 'Krusaka'. In launching the peasant movement in the organised form of a mass agitation he seemed to adopt the Gandhian style of symbolic action. His instruction to the peasants not to lie prostrate before the landlords but to stand erect and politely fold the hands as equals had the desired effect. This seemingly trivial action had a perceptible impact on lifting the morale of the peasants. He became the undisputed leader of peasants in the British Orissa who marched into the princely states almost in the Garibaldian manner and waged a war against the princes.

The young socialist leaders of the time that included Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi, Nabakrishna Choudhury and Prananath Patnaik along with Bhubanananda Das stressed on creating appropriate literature as vehicles for propagating the revolutionary ideas against social exploitation under the feudal rule. This step not only helped take the messages of the leaders to the people of the states and to the peasants of the British Orissa, the literary works created in this period became a treasure for the Oriya literature.

Around 1938, the leaders like Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi, Prananath Patnaik, Gurucharan Patnaik and Ramakrishna Pati turned increasingly radical in their approach and dissociated themselves from the other socialists. They formed the Orissa Communist Party and remained deeply involved in the people's movement in the states.

One would notice that by the year 1938 an awareness had been created against the prevalent system in the princely states. The Orissa States Peoples' Conference soon branched out into 'Prajamandals' in various states; the Peasants Association and the Socialist Workers' Organisation began to consolidate their action for striking at the roots of the feudal order. The rulers of these states, in an effort to assuage the feelings of their subjects, organised 'Prajamandals' or the Peoples Welfare Conference.[48] However, these seemed half-hearted measures and consequently failed to evoke any enthusiastic response from the people at large. The rulers decided to revert to ruthless repression. The situation now changed for the worse.

The deep-seated unrest came to the fore with the revolt in Nilgiri state in 1938. Soon it spread to several states.

Nilgiri Blazes a Trail

Nilgiri was surrounded on all sides by the British Orissa except its northwest border, which was shared with Mayurbhanj.

This location was fully utilised by the people both from within as well as out side the state of Nilgiri during the movement in the state since the late twenties. The rebels could flee to the British Orissa in order to escape the wrath of the ruler.

Apart from several small uprisings from time to time in the nineteenth century[49] the first sensational confrontation between the people and the administration took place in 1928 when the former refused to respond to the order for huge gifts and free labour during the wedding of the princess although such demands had been answered without any protest traditionally.

The concept of 'Satyagraha' meanwhile had revolutionised the people's outlook. Mahtab, who belonged to Bhadrak area in the Balasore district, could influence the people of Nilgiri from outside the state's border. The situation of mass discontent in 1928 was the right opportunity for Mahtab to step in and provide a strong leadership. In the year 1929, Mahtab led the people of Nilgiri in their salt agitation at Inchudi. Subsequently, in the Civil Disobedience in 1931, there was large-scale participation from the people of the state.

In the Ayodhya village of Nilgiri, a group of educated youth formed the 'Yuvaka Sakha Samiti'[50] with Hadibandhu Raj and Ramachandra Mohapatra as president and secretary respectively. The association's main thrust was the literacy drive and the uplift of the untouchables. Gandhi had by then launched the anti-untouchable movement as another of his novel programmes. By 1932 an anti-untouchable committee had already been formed at Sabarmati. The government however did not look upon this effort as a reform movement but dubbed it as a vehicle with eventual political motive. Consequently, the government servants were not allowed to take any part in the activities.[51] The association at Nilgiri, on the other hand, took seriously to the philosophy of the movement. For example, a community dinner in the month of May on the anniversary of the foundation day was organised with a good deal of fervour, where untouchables shared food with the rest. Eventually, the Congress members also joined in the dinner as a symbolic strategy to defy the hierarchical order in the Nilgiri state. The ruler was incensed as was anticipated and in 1937 he declared that the dining programme was against the ancient traditions and custom of the state and as such would not be permitted.

It was also the time when the Orissa States Peoples' Conference (OSPC) arrived with a fresh enthusiasm and with a focused programme. Sarangadhar Das held the OSPC meeting at

Balasore in February 1938 and extended their support to the people of Nilgiri.

In a meeting at Ayodhya on 1 May in 1938, the 'Yuvaka Sakha Samiti', which by now was the main local body in the state, identified itself with the Congress entirely and emphasised on its demands relating to the popular control of state budget, reduction of land revenue, right in forest and the introduction of prohibition.[52]

Supported by the external leadership, by its own intellectuals and also by a number of landlords in the state, the association progressed with its agitation. The ruler was obviously upset and felt insecure. He prepared to initiate steps for countering the mass uprise. Regulations were issued for registration of the association and prior permission of public meeting. These were promptly defied by the leaders and they were put behind bars. In order to quell the agitations, the 'durbar' issued notification declaring any demonstration as unlawful. The people however were in no mood to relent. They took out processions on May 27 and 29, 1938, this time holding the tri-colour National Flag. This led to large-scale arrest of the participants in the procession; the association was declared illegal and the socialist paper 'Krusaka' believed to be fanning the unrest was banned. Public demonstrations also took place in the British Orissa supporting the cause of the Nilgiri people and drawing the attention of liberal minded people all over. It led to the open and formal support for the Congress through the Praja Mandals.

Mahtab and Sarangadhar Das now lent assistance in forming the Nilgiri Prajamandal at Gadiamal in the Balasore district in June 1938. Kailash Chandra Mohanty became its president and Banamali Das was the secretary. Located outside the state's territory, it operated as the center for training the volunteers identified for carrying out the movement in the state. The Congress leaders also came and held discussions at this centre for deciding

on the course of action. The centre was called, 'Ashram.' It also stored 'lathis' and axe for use by the people in order to resist the state administration when required.[53]

Soon, meetings and demonstrations followed demanding a welfare government and relief from various taxes and exactions. A public speech by Sarangadhar Das narrating the violence perpetrated by the ruler on the satyagrahis through mercenaries and asserting that the satyagrahis were truly non-violent following the Gandhian principle had a great impact.[54] 'Machuapatna' became the centre of a storm where the local tribes lent their full support to the agitators against the 'durbar'. Help was requested from the Orissa Government by the 'durbar', which however did not come through. Assistance was also sought from other princely states and the then political agent Major Bazelgette was simultaneously appraised.

Seeing the peaceful demonstration of the people, Bazelgette asked the 'durbar' to negotiate with them. The 'durbar' instead attempted to win over the tribal people against the satyagrahis and when all that failed violence was unleashed on the people. Mahtab and Sarangadhar Das as well as the political agent Bazelgette hurried to Nilgiri and negotiations were resumed. The political prisoners were released and the Prajamandal presented thirty-one demands of which the 'durbar' conceded initially only seventeen. With the intervention of the resident by October 1938, six more demands were conceded.

This step eliminated most of the unjust and oppressive taxes and services, though a welfare and democratic government was still a far cry.

Dhenkanal through a Tumultuous Time

Bordering the districts of Balasore and Cuttack, which had been acting as the nerve centres of the Orissa State Peoples' movement, Dhenkanal appeared to catch the fire from the Nilgiri embers.

The Salt Agitation in the country had brought in a new culture to the milieu. If salt could be the symbol of resisting the British Empire, 'pan' (betel leaf), an indispensable part of the social culture of the Oriyas, especially of the common man was chosen as the weapon to fight the high-handedness and feudalism of the Dhenkanal rule.

The Dhenkanal State Gazette of July 30, 1938 announced the state monopoly on 'pan' and declared that the defaulters would be punishable under section 188. The price of 'pan' being much higher in Dhenkanal, the people preferred to buy it from the neighbouring regions. With the imposition of the threat, they boycotted the 'pan' from the state and declared a war of protest.

The Dhenkanal 'State Praja Mandal' had already been formed in June 1938; now the people used this as a common platform to air their grievances. To mitigate the popular anger and to counter the 'Praja Mandal', the 'durbar' formed the 'Praja Mangal Samity'. However, the tidal waves from across the border was flowing in Dhenkanal too and could not be contained by the far-from-credible 'Praja Mangal Samity'.

The kissan meeting on the 1 and 2 September 1938 in the village of bordering Jenapur of the Cuttack district devoted its meeting on the second day entirely to the Dhenkanal problem. With Sarangadhar Das as the chairperson, the 'Dhenkanal Praja Mandal' constitution was drafted and village level branches were formed. A wider circulation for the journal 'Krusaka' was also planned[55]. The people's movement was unstoppable now with the 'Ranbheri' (the War Trumpet) leaflet encouraging the people to shed off all fear and join the mass agitation. On 11 September the 'durbar' took a drastic step in arresting some of the key Prajamandal leaders. This action prompted an immediate retaliation. The people organised themselves throughout the night. On the following day, i.e., 12 September, fifty thousand of them surrounded the palace. Their intention was to demolish it and

each one take away a piece of brick of the building[56]. The Dhenkanal palace was looked upon as much a symbol of tyranny as Bastille on the eve of the French Revolution.

The 'durbar' in the meanwhile had brought in an external force and firing was resorted to leading to death and injury. Next day, people from the states of Hindol, Athagarh and Tigiria poured into Dhenkanal and several leaders from Orissa arrived too. A decision was taken to carry on the non-violent agitation and to seek the negotiation with the 'durbar.' While matters appeared to be improving with the 'durbar'agreeing to set up an enquiry committee and releasing the political prisoners and further negotiation was on, the British troops arrived on 20 September and the Praja Mandal leaders were rearrested. Inhuman repression and torture took place forcing the people to flee the state. The see saw battle between the 'durbar' and the Praja Mandal created a havoc in the state. The various groups from Orissa appealed to Gandhi to come and support the people of Dhenkanal. Gandhi said, "... I feel that the Ministers in the provinces are morally bound to take notice of gross misrule in the States within their borders and to render advice to the Paramount Power as to what in their opinion, should be done."[57] In 1939, the Political Department decided to withdraw the powers of the ruler and a 'dewan' was appointed with full powers of administration.

Princely States on Fire

As has been described in the foregoing, starting with Nilgiri, the entire princely states experienced a turbulent time during 1938-39 with a spate of uprisings against the rulers gaining momentum. The Orissa State Peoples' Conference was the flaming torch kindling the fire in the heart of the common people and could forge a unity against the monarchical flags. Simultaneously it built up a sympathy wave around the British Orissa thus narrowing the distance between the people of these regions. The endeavour to include the tribal people in the Praja Mandals as active

participants strengthened the organisation even further. The newspapers, 'Samaj', 'Prajatantra' and 'Asa' published fiery accounts of the dark side of the administration in the states. These newspapers were being secretly taken into the states even though they were banned and all attempts were made by the rulers to prevent their entry into princely territories.

The 'All Orissa Garjat Day' and strikes were observed in various places on 29 December 1938[58], in the Orissa province. The radicals in the Congress fully encouraged this agitation. Nabakrishna Choudhury resigned from the Orissa Legislative Assembly. He and his associates went to Dhenkanal and led in what was almost a war against its ruler; and courted arrest.[59]

In many other states too, these socialist leaders interacted with 'Prajamandals' and helped them stage strong demonstrations. Radhanath Rath, Sarangadhar Das and Pabitramohan Pradhan were only a few of the host of names from the states organising the 'Prajamandals' more and more on revolutionary lines. They demanded restoration of civil rights, abolition of illegal taxes and establishment of responsible governments. Most of the states presented a picture of complete chaos. The Dhenkanal firing and outrages,[60] the exodus of Talcher,[61] the murder of political agent Major Bazelgette at Ranpur[62] and the death of the innocents at Gangpur[63] were only the consequences of the inaction by the unresponsive administration. The desperate rulers would try to annihilate the opposition by force, and the mob frenzy would no more stick to the path of non-violence.

Some of the All India Congress leaders were critical of the goings on. Gandhi expressed his dissatisfaction over the happenings[64] and the All India Working Committee in the Bardoli session resolved that the Congress would not deviate from its principle of non-violence.[65] Gandhi had instructed earlier that in case of satyagraha inside the states no outside volunteer would be sent. Gandhi's policy of non-intervention in the states was

guided by two broad factors. First, he did not appreciate a class war, which was the influence of Marxism and did not desire to take sides. Further, he also needed the united strength of both rulers and subjects in his fight against the British. Antagonising the rulers would encourage the British policy of divide and rule, thus jeopardising the freedom movement, he thought. He therefore pleaded with the rulers to see 'the writing on the wall' and mend their ways. He exhorted the subjects to carry on the satyagraha through non-violence.[66]

The development in the states generated mixed reactions amongst the Congress workers in Orissa. The strict Gandhians would not prefer intervention while the socialists believed that the states merited a special treatment as far as Congress was concerned.[67] These factions, however, joined hands in tackling serious problems arising out of the unrest of 1938. The British Orissa faced the challenge of rehabilitating the refugees when there was a mass exodus. From Talcher alone fled 26,000 people and the number swelled with time. Nabakrishna Choudhury and his wife Malati Choudhury established an Ashram in Angul. It was named after Baji Rout, the child hero who succumbed to the police firing at Dhenkanal on 10 November 1938. The Ashram soon became the haven for the children of the political fugitives and the tribal community who had been hounded out of the states by their rulers.[68]

A large number of local leaders did not support the agitation of 1938-1939, as it adopted violence and vitiated the relationship between the ruler and the subjects. They blamed the urban people for instigating the unrest.[69] The 'Desakatha', a newspaper published from Cuttack,[70] articulated similar sentiments from the states. It aired the view that the agitators from Orissa were only upsetting the administrative set up in the states without any specific goal such as achieving reforms, especially in education and economy that was urgently needed in these areas. However,

such measures as would bring the mass awakening were beyond the purview of the Mughalbandi 'babus' who had no idea about the prevailing situation in the states. They did not realise that these areas were not suitable for the experiment of the Marxist theory.

The paper was also critical that the leaders who withdrew after the storm to Cuttack (Nabakrishna) or to Agarpara (Mahtab) where they lived, were not available to handle the chaos they created in the region or even to deal with the subsequent crisis that resulted.

The World War II followed soon after, it required the support of the princely states. In addition, the agitation had adversely affected the cultivation in many areas and in the following years there were wide spread droughts and floods. All these drained the royal treasury. In many cases, the state could not meet the basic expenses. The rulers held the Congress leaders responsible for their predicament and for leaving them in the lurch.[71]

All in all, the unrest of 1938-1939 was in a way, of seismic dimension and had far-reaching consequences in the princely states.

The Report of the States Enquiry Committee: Winds of Change

The States Enquiry Committee, formed to look into the affairs in the states undertook a detailed survey and came out with its report in 1939. In the recommendations it said that in view of the inherent inability of the Orissa states to provide for a popular enlightened administration in their areas and considering the massive demonstrations against the rulers as well as popular demands for the rights of self- government and self-determination, the earlier contract between the state rulers and the British Government be dissolved. These chiefs be better redesignated as landlords as was the practice in the permanently settled estates of the British Orissa. Further, the chiefs as well as the people of states be placed under the jurisdiction of the autonomous province of Orissa.[72]

The recommendations of the Enquiry Committee were shelved because of the outbreak of the World War II. They nevertheless mooted the principles of a radical change warranted in the princely states.

Towards Merger

The War Years

The Enquiry Committee Report did not seem to have any serious impact either on the states or on the British Government, they were preoccupied with preparation for the War.

The states got themselves fully geared up for providing the necessary aid to the British and the latter expressed their appreciation to the princes in full measure. A large number of states from the Eastern States Agency were admitted as members in the Chamber of Princes in 1940 perhaps in return for their unstinted assistance to the British Government. This was looked upon as a great elevation among the peers. A stream of congratulatory messages flowed between the rulers. Seraikella and Patna (Bolangir-Patna) rulers, father and son, received the honour at the same time and were visibly pleased.[73]

The rulers tried to exert themselves fully in order to mobilise the resources required by the British in War. The Amrit Bazar Patrika, dated 20 August 1940, reported, "On his 53 birthday celebration, the Seraikella chief, Raja Aditya Pratap in his capacity as the Prsident of the Council of rulers, made a fervent appeal to his brother princes to rise to the occasion and should there be any need, stir up the traditional Kshatriya martial spirit to help the crown to quell the aggression of the nazis on civilization." Political agents toured the states for collecting war funds.[74] A National War Front movement was organised in the states and several activities were undertaken. The state of Patna sent 3,912 coolies for the construction of Assam road.[75] Investments under Defence Saving Scheme were encouraged among the subjects.[76] The rulers of the states introduced diverse other schemes as well

in their war efforts. Dhenkanal constituted six sub-committees to deal with wide ranging issues.[77] The Mayurbhanj ruler pledged his personal services and resources of the state to the British for facing the emergency.[78] The Rani Saheba of Keonjhar started a Girls' Guide War Fund for Eastern States Agency.[79] The Council of Rulers of the Eastern States also decided to provide a spitfire aircraft, named 'East States' to the War.[80]

Even in the midst of hectic activities of the wartime, some of the states tried to introduce welfare schemes for the people. For example, students in Patna, were awarded scholarships to study different subjects.[81] Similarly, the Mayurbhanj state sanctioned 5000 rupees to the home tusser growers.[82] The Arbour Day (a tree plantation programme) was adopted in all states on 22 July 1941.[83] Grow More Food campaign was also organised in all states through the initiatives of the 'Panchayats' and 'Praja Sabhas'.[84] Nayagarh adopted a specific policy for promoting its indigenous industries.[85] Baramba encouraged its weavers for their indigenous handloom sarees.[86]

However, a strategy was also worked out to tighten the noose around the Praja Mandal leaders. For example, in Talcher, Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, president Talcher Praja Mandal and Maguni Pradhan the secretary were convicted.[87] Similarly, Banamali Das, the secretary of the Nilgiri Praja Mandal was arrested.[88] The condition of the jail where political prisoners were lodged was dreadful.[89]

In August 1942 when the Quit India Movement began in Orissa, the people in the states chose to join in. The freedom movement against the British Raj was launched concurrently with their struggle for liberation from the local raj.[90] The rulers were now alarmed and strong measures were promulgated. There was turbulence and chaos all around in the states. For example, the British force resorted to aerial firing in Talcher state and people

retaliated with their parallel government called the 'Chasi Mulia Raj' (rule of the peasants and workers).

The pressure of the War, the speculation about the British leaving the country looming large and the violent confrontation with their own people, forced the rulers go through their toughest test yet.

The Eastern Sates Union

In order to cope with the widespread unrest and the uncertain situation, most of the rulers of the Eastern States Agency combined to form their own guild. They proceeded along the scheme for a cooperative grouping of the states.[91] Meanwhile the resignation of the Congress ministry in Orissa and the formation of a coalition ministry under the Parlakimedi chief from 1941 to 1944 encouraged the rulers of the Orissa states to hope for a better relationship with the provincial authorities. They were also optimistic now to survive as independent units retaining their royal identity on a friendly give- and- take basis with the province of Orissa.

Soon after the War, however, Nehru's presidential address to the All India States Peoples' Conference at Udaipur on 31 December 1945 "... that all these ancient and harmful relics will have to go if the people as a whole are to raise themselves out of the morass of poverty and degradation"[92] triggered a panic among the rulers of the Eastern States Agency.

On 17 and 18 April 1946, some of the rulers from Orissa and Chatisgarh States Agency that included Sonepur, Mayurbhanj (attended on the 17th only), Patna, Kalahandi, Seraikella, Korea, Bamra, Khandapara (attended on the 18th), Khairagarh along with the Tikayat (the heir apparent) and Kumar Saheb of Seraikella and K.C. Neyogi, who was earlier the 'dewan' of the Mayurbhanj state and then a Minister in the Government of India's Interim Ministry, met at the Sonepur house in Calcutta.[93] In line with a decision in the meeting, the chief of Seraikella,

Aditya Pratap Singh Deo wired to Gandhi requesting an appointment for himself and for the raja of Korea (Chatisgarh) for discussing their future status "and also to impress upon him the undesirability of the Orissa Congress leaders taking a hostile attitude by carrying an anti-state propaganda."[94] Gandhi's secretary Pyarelal replied on 29 April 1946, that in this regard Gandhi advised the rulers to meet Nehru (Appendix II). The rulers then requested B.C. Roy of Bengal to arrange a meeting for them with Gandhi. Roy replied that he would try. The Seraikella chief carried on the correspondence with Dr. Roy (Appendix III a & b). The chief of Korea considered it prudent to meet Nehru for the latter, "... as the President of the States Peoples' Conference will largely shape the attitude and the programme of the States people..." (Appendix IV). Maharaja Pratap Keshari Deo of Kalahandi thought that in the event of a meeting with Nehru, it was necessary to induct younger members of the royalty in the representative body (Appendix V).

Meanwhile, in the elections of 1946, Mahtab became the Premier of Orissa province on 23 April 1946. He took up the issues relating to the Orissa states with the Cabinet Mission in 1946.

The princes of the Indian states too met the Cabinet Mission and expressed their unwillingness to be transferred to any government succeeding the British in India. The Cabinet Mission was seized of the issues associated with the popular unrest in the states; yet did not endorse the merger of the states with the Indian Union. In its statement on 16 May 1946, the Cabinet Mission pointed out instead that an amicable solution should be reached through mutual negotiations between the states and the provincial authorities. Such a non-committal stand created more confusion among the parties concerned.

Around this time, the Praja Mandal movement was revived in the states with great passion through the backing of the ministry

in Orissa. Mahtab's report in 1939 had already recommended for the abolition of the princedom; he would now leave no stone unturned to implement his plan.

The princes, in order to counter this move, began taking some immediate measures. They constituted legislative bodies in their respective states and granted constitutional powers to their people. Replying to Mahtab's circular to the rulers dated 9 May 1946, the Seraikella chief wrote on 20 May 1946 that in consideration of the deep and long standing connection between the states and the Orissa province, as well as in the interest of continuing the cordial relationship, it was necessary that the agitations in the states endorsed by the Government of Orissa be withdrawn. This step, the chief argued, would enable the state authorities and the Congress to enter into a fruitful negotiation, instead of a warpath. He also disapproved of the press statement in Orissa against the rulers and wanted Mahtab to contradict them (Appendix VI a). Mahtab expressed his unwillingness to interfere in the democratic rights and freedom of the press. The Seraikella chief pointed out that he too believed in the freedom of expression by the press, he was, however, against the publication of misleading facts which created bad feelings between the states and the province (Appendix VI b).

The Seraikella chief also attempted to negotiate with the Congress leaders on the all India level. Replying to his letter of 27 May 1947, Nehru wrote on 31 May 1947, "...The Rulers of most of the States seem to be completely oblivious of what is happening in India and in the world. On no account and whatever happens, we are not going to leave the people in the lurch. We shall at the same time try to accommodate the Rulers. If, however, the Rulers adopt an attitude hostile to their people, then it is not our fault if their position is weakened..." (Appendix VII).

Thus, Nehru did not send an optimistic signal to the rulers; and the Orissa government being openly hostile, a strong sense

of insecurity gripped the rulers. To safeguard their interest they went ahead with their plan to form 'The Eastern States Union' comprising states from Orissa and Chatisgarh.[95] The AISPC's regional council for Orissa and C.P. in its session at Cuttack in March 1947 had urged the rulers of the Eastern States Agency not to proceed with their plan of forming a union as it was wrong from the cultural, linguistic, social, geographical and economic points of view. The suggestion was ignored. On the other hand, the rulers even contemplated on a new province of Kosal or Mahakosal that would include Eastern States, Angul and Sambalpur.[96] Mayurbhanj, under the Bengal States Agency, decided to stay away from the design "as the Maharaja considered his state to be a viable unit to join the Indian Federation alone."[97]

In order to prevent the amalgamation of states with Orissa, the ruler of Patna wrote to the Viceroy on 30 June 1947 to consider with sympathy the case of the Orissa states. The ruler of Seraikella submitted a memorial on 30 July 1947 to the Resident Colonel Todd pointing out that "...The Congress of Orissa... is casting a covetous eye on the resources of these states in order to enrich the province quickly...To hand over the States to such unscrupulous people of narrow minded vision and low capacity will be a most treacherous and unjustified act and a gross exploitation of the true interest of the States..."[98] On 1 August 1947 the Eastern States Union comprising thirty nine states of Orissa and Chatisgarh started functioning from their capital at Raigarh and elected Korea and Kalahandi as president and vice-president respectively.[99]

With the country attaining its freedom and with the creation of the States Department under Sardar Patel, Mahtab was encouraged to pursue his plan of amalgamation of the states with Orissa. For the rulers, the atmosphere of despair and uncertainty continued; their meeting with Mahtab in Sambalpur on 16 October

1947 for an agreeable settlement of the issue was of no avail.[100] The Nilgiri episode that followed did not help their cause either.

In Nilgiri, the ruler was attempting to use all methods at his command to suppress the Praja Mandal activities that had intensified after the independence. He tried to win over the tribal support by instigating them against the non-tribal people; sought assistance of armed police from the Eastern States joint police force and strengthened his own army. The armed force of the ruler resorted to third degree measure against Praja Mandal activists creating a volatile situation amongst the masses. The Orissa government found it hard to remain a passive spectator of the anarchy in a neighbouring state. They sought and received the approval of the Dominion Government, and authorised the magistrate of Balasore on 14 November 1947, to take over the administration from the ruler of the Nilgiri state. The Government of Orissa began administering the state as an occupied territory until 1 January 1948 when the merger status was legalised.

The Nilgiri takeover created a rift among the members of the Eastern States Union. The Athagarh ruler, Swami Vidyananda's letter dated 20 November 1947, to Radhanath Rath who was the editor of Samaj as well as the president of the Athagarh Praja Mandal enclosed an appeal by the ruler which said, "... Let us dissolve the Eastern States Union, which has proved an administrative failure and an expensive and useless appendage. Let the people decide what union shall be suitable to their interest and also the method and manner of merger."[101]

However, the Eastern States Union representatives now hurried to Delhi and met Gandhi, Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Pattabhi Sitaramaya during 29 November--6 December 1947 and expressed their willingness to modify the constitution of the Eastern States Union according to the advice and desire of the Dominion Government.[102]

Mahtab's Blue Print for a Greater Orissa

At this juncture, Mahtab prepared a carefully structured memorandum on behalf of the Orissa government, signed by the Chief Secretary, B.C. Mukherjee dated 11 December 1947 and submitted it to the States Department under Patel on 12 December 1947.[103] In his blueprint for the future administrative status of the states, he expressed himself strongly against the continuation of the personal rule by the rulers for that would tantamount to thrusting autocracy on the people again. He also argued against the idea of leaving the administration of certain subjects with the states for, this arrangement would raise constitutional problems. He pleaded against appointment of responsible Ministers in individual states for that would not be financially feasible for the states. Taking into consideration the interests of the rulers, the people of the states, the provincial government of Orissa and the Dominion Government, the suggestion for a gradual policy of integration according to Mahtab also looked unworkable. He was in favour of clear and swift merger of the states with Orissa.

In the states, the people favoured the introduction of a democratic government although there was no complete unanimity as far as the absorption in the province of Orissa was concerned. Some preferred a partial separation of political and economic existence. The latter option of what looked like creating a sub-province however, was dismissed by Mahtab for the uniformity in the language and culture among the people of both the regions did not match with such an arrangement.

The Orissa government took into account the viewpoints of the people of the Orissa province also with regard to the merger of the states. The memorandum said, "...while the people of Orissa states have nothing to lose by their complete amalgamation with the province of Orissa, the people of the province can rightly apprehend that the amalgamation would, instead of benefiting

them in any way, drag them down to a lower economic level. We, have, however reasons to believe that mainly for sentimental reasons and in consideration of the natural ties that link the two parts, the public of the province would not be opposed to the idea of amalgamation." Mahtab stuck to his view that although the amalgamation would mean a huge administrative and financial responsibility on the part of the Orissa province, this was the only viable alternative.

On 13 December 1947, Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister of the country along with his States Ministry Secretary V.P. Menon visited Orissa. Invitations had been sent earlier to the Orissa states to attend the meeting at the Government House, Cuttack, on 14 December 1947; the B and C class states were to attend the morning session and the A class states, the afternoon session. Patel conferred with the princes, asked them to submit their consent for the merger, otherwise he said, "I do not take responsibility for law and order in your state."[104] In the long discussion with both the groups Patel answered queries regarding the legislative rights of the rulers in the greater Orissa to be created by their merger; about the privy purse; issues relating to the dynastic succession; about the temple land endowments and about various privileges and rights. The B and C class sates excepting Bonai, Athmallik and Tigiria who could not attend the meeting, signed the agreement in the evening on the same day. The absentees were permitted to sign it later. The A class states signed the agreement on the following morning, i.e. on 15 December 1947.[105]

Mayurbhanj state had transferred the power meanwhile to the popular government headed by Sarat Chandra Das on 10 December 1947. Thus when Patel asked Mayurbhanj to sign the instrument of merger, Maharaja Pratap Chandra Bhanja explained his inability to sign the document, as he did not possess the rightful authority to do so any more.

Under the agreement signed by the rulers of twenty-five states it was decided to transfer the administration of the state to the Dominion Government on 1 January 1948.

Although it was expected to be a peaceful transition and stable arrangement, within days of signing of the agreement of merger by the Orissa princely states, popular dissatisfaction was apparent in some states. In some of them, voices of resentment were heard against complete merger; one suspected this sentiment was fanned by the rulers.

More important, as Singhbum remained outside the boundaries of Orissa and Mayurbhanj remained independent, Seraikella and Kharswan had no physical boundary with Orissa and remained connected to Bihar instead. This opportunity was exploited to a great extent by Bihar to retain the two states permanently. The strategy of the well known political leader of south Bihar, Jaipal Singh Munda aided Bihar in this manoeuvre.

The Adivasi Movement, Jaipal Singh Munda and the Destiny of Seraikella and Kharswan

The legendary Birsa Munda led movement known as 'ulgulan' during the last decade of the19th century in Chotanagpur helped arouse the tribal (Adivasi) awareness appreciably.[106] With the turn of the century, various reform groups emerged that aimed at ameliorating the condition of the Adivasis of the land by rising against the 'dikus' (the outsiders) as well as by changing some of the social habits of the tribal people through the influence of Gandhi. In due course, various socio political streams combined and launched a campaign for a separate statehood for the tribes of south Bihar.[107]

In 1938, the 'Adivasi Sabha' was formed that assimilated all the factions in Chotanagpur and became the pan-tribal organisation. The following year the Oxford educated, charismatic Jaipal Singh Munda was made its president. Under his powerful leadership, the stature of the organisation changed and it was

converted into an all India body; 'Adivasi Sabha' became 'Adivasi Mahasabha'.

Jaipal alias Pramod Pahan was born into a Munda family of priests on 3 January 1903 at Takra village of the Khunti subdivision in the present Jharkhand province.[108] He joined the St. Paul School in Ranchi as Jaipal Singh. The principal of the school, Canon Cosgrave took a liking to the boy and he converted him into Christianity. In 1918 Jaipal went to England with his mentor and graduated from the St. John's College in Oxford in 1926 with honours in Economics. At Oxford he distinguished himself in studies, in sports and was also a star orator. In 1928 he led the Indian hockey team to the level of finals in the Amsterdam Olympics where India received the gold for the first time. He joined Burma Shell in India as a senior executive when he married Tara Winfried Majumdar, the grand-daughter of Woomesh Chandra Banerjee, the first President of the Indian National Congress. Subsequently, Jaipal served at the Prince of Wales College at Achimota, Gold Coast, Ghana. In 1937, he returned to India as the vice-principal and the principal incumbent of the Rajkumar College, Raipur. In 1938, he left the school and joined the Bikaner state as a minister where soon he was promoted as the foreign secretary.

Jaipal thought that with his varied experience he would be more useful to the country through the Congress. However, as his first encounter with Rajendra Prasad did not go well, he chose to return to his homeland to lead the tribal movement that had just started. A true Munda with a deep attachment for his jungle culture, with his many faceted talents and wide-ranging experience when Jaipal arrived as a leader, the tribals of the region gave their wholehearted support to him. As many as sixty-five thousand people gathered to see him and listen to his maiden presidential speech at the Adivasi Sabha forum on 20 January 1939. His oratory simultaneously in Mundari, Sadani, Hindi and English mesmerised men and women from all walks of life.

"The Adivasi movement stands primarily for the moral and material advancement of Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas," said Jaipal and set as its goal a separate administrative status for the area.[109]

Jaipal was instantly the people's 'Marang Gomke' -- their supreme leader. The history of the region became a part of Jaipal's life. In 1946 he became a member of the Constituent Assembly. As a close friend of the doyens of anthropology S.C. Roy and Verrier Elwin and supported by Ambedkar he led his 'Glorious Struggle' both inside and outside the legislature to establish the tribal identity.

The Jharkhand province that he envisaged included Chotanagpur, Santal Pargana, Chatisgarh princely sates and Seraikella and Kharswan. Jaipal's blue print of Jharkhand weakened Orissa's stand in the tribal dominated region of Singhbhum including the princely states of Seraikella and Kharswan. The strategy was to prevent the amalgamation of the regions with Orissa and eventually work towards a new Jharkhand province to be carved out of Bihar.

To the Bihar leaders, the concept of Jharkhand was an absurdity. They were also aware that the Central Government would not favour any provincial division at that point of time. Jaipal's campaign to counter Orissa's claim in Singhbhum was therefore endorsed fully by Bihar. The rulers of Seraikella and Kharswan saw the prospect of winning full support of their tribal subjects through Jaipal. In their calculation, this would thwart the immediate menace of Orissa's planned administrative takeover on 1 January 1948; thereafter, they would try for the reversal of the agreement of merger with Orissa. Consequently, the integration with Bihar was considered vital by Seraikella and Kharswan; for that would open up an opportunity for the revival of the Eastern States Union movement. Jaipal's interest in the Eastern States Union, however was confined to strengthening his campaign for

a separate unit of the tribal dominated land of Jharkhand. His stint at the Rajkumar College had brought him closer to the royalties of the region; with his impressive background and personality he could easily befriend the rulers. Thus, presently Seraikella and Kharswan became the center stage where diverse groups aspired to fulfill their respective targets, the subversion of Orissa's claim on these states being the immediate common goal. Watching this development, Mahtab sent the chief of Kanika and a member of the Keonjhar royal house as mediators for influencing the Seraikella and Kharswan rulers and change their anti-Orissa stand. This effort however did not bear fruit. Seraikella and Kharswan stuck to their demand to join Bihar.

Sensing trouble, the Central Government asked the Government of Orissa to take control of the situation in these two states immediately and take over the administration, as scheduled on 1 January 1948.

On the D-day, tribal people from all over Chotanagpur arrived in Seraikella and Kharswan in order to demonstrate against the union with Orissa. Interestingly, Jaipal did not show up. In Seraikella the police measures kept the situation under control and the process of transfer to Orissa took place without any major problem. In Kharswan the people led a procession in the morning and had a meeting in the market square in the afternoon. Things went awry however when at Kharswan, the police force could not control the sudden outburst of mob frenzy and opened fire; it resulted in large number of death of the tribal people.

Seraikella and Kharswan came under the administration of Orissa government. However, the Kharswan incident was made a big issue by the interested parties to discredit the Orissa government. Comments were made even until years later that the integration was inaugurated in a blood bath.[110] Jaipal raised the issue in the Constituent Assembly and held the Orissa government responsible for the Kharswan event. Patel dismissed

the allegation and also rejected Jaipal's demand of an enquiry committee.

In February 1948, the Central Government however appointed a tribunal under the Chief Justice Baudekar of Bombay High Court for studying various aspects relating to Seraikella and Kharswan and also to decide on their future status. The constitution of the tribunal provided sufficient indication that the merger of these two states with Orissa was not final and that the arrangement might be revisited. This led to the revival of the anti- and pro-merger agitation vis-a -vis Orissa. Incidentally, the Baudekar Tribunal did not take off.

During this time the Oriyas in Singhbhum attempted to draw the attention of the Central Government to the fact that it was the entire Singhbum and not the two states of Seraikella and Kharswan alone that constituted the Oriya-speaking tract. A memorandum entitled, 'Singhbhum' by the Dhalbhum Oriyas prepared by Tarapada Sadangi provided details of the historical, geographical and cultural connections of the region with Orissa. The memorial invoked the Congress pledge to the provincial redistribution on linguistic basis and strongly recommended to transfer the whole of Singhbhum including Seraikella and Kharswan to the Orissa province.[111]

Bhupendra Narayan Singh Deo, the third son of the ruler of Seraikella activated the 'Praja Samity' for campaigning against the Orissa government and the Oriyas who favoured a permanent merger with Orissa.The officers from Orissa appointed in the states were harassed no end; 'Praja Samity' carried on, at many places parallel administration. The tribal people at Chalkani also followed suit.[112] In short, the local administration in the two states found themselves in a disarray and the Government of Orissa could not ensure anything beyond only a token control over these areas.

Jaipal had taken upon himself the case of Seraikella and Kharswan as a vindication for his movement for Jharkhand. In

his presidential speech at the Adivasi Mahasabha's annual session at Ranchi on 28 February 1948, Jaipal said, "...I have, ever since the Kharswan massacre on 1 January, been trying to probe into the deeper reasons for the promiscuous merger, and I am more and more inclined to the view that there has been some conspiracy either at the Centre or in the Provinces to create the present situation with a view to administering a rude shock on the Adivasi Movement."[113]

In the same speech he also made reference to the murder of Bazelgette in Ranpur on 5 January 1939 and the Gangpur firing on 25 April 1939, which he said brought the "Adivasi question into prominence. Simko (Gangpur) set Adivasidom in conflagration politically. All on a sudden, a new awakening began, and much of our success in the district board elections in Singhbhum and Ranchi . . . depended upon the sacrifices made by the people of Rajgangpur and Ranpur."[114]Meanwhile, Jaipal was also spreading his influence in the tribal dominated regions of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Bonai, which were the border states of Singhbhum.

Simultaneously with the tribal movement, the Eastern States Union also revived its agitation against the total merger with the Orissa province. In a memorandum to V.P. Menon dated 30 January, 1948, the states of Patna, Dhenkanal, Korea and Seraikella asked for the recognition of the Eastern States Union.[115] Interestingly, the signatories were all close relations. The Seraikella chief Raja Aditya Pratap Singh Deo's second son was Maharaja R. N. Singh Deo of Patna; Aditya Pratap's son-in-law and nephew was the Raja S.P. Singh Deo of Dhenkanal, and the Raja R.P. Singh Deo of Korea was his brother-in- law. With strong family alliances these rulers formed a close bond among themselves in order to protect their rights, privileges and above all their royal identity.

The memorandum, which they submitted pointed out, "...It will be seen that while some kind of administrative integration with the adjoining Provinces was recognised by all parties as being desirable, neither the Rulers of the 'A Class' States nor the Dominion Government contemplated -- nor did popular opinion approve -- anything approaching total merger. We would like to emphasise that in signing the Agreement we have not ceded our territories nor have we severed all connections with our States. The Rulers should, therefore, be given an honourable position in any constitution that may be framed in order to indicate the continuance of their sovereignty. It is also obvious that any scheme that may be adopted for this purpose should accord with the wishes of the people, which should be ascertained in appropriate manner."[116]

A pamphlet was prepared by the people of these states entitled 'An Appeal of the People of Eastern States' which pointed out, ". . . Are the people of the Eastern States considered to be so worthless, that they will be forced to merge with the Provinces against whom they have got a long standing bitter feelings, and be exploited by them . . . We have never been averse to cooperation between the States and the neighbouring Provinces, in matter of common concern . . . Complete merger was never the intention of any one and that idea must be removed once for all . . ." The appeal was made to all the Indians and it said, "People of the States, Unite, Organise and be ready to Fight for your Right."[117]

The revival of the Eastern States Union movement and the confusion existing in the administration in the states of Seraikella and Kharswan sent the signal to the Central Government that all was not well with these two Oriya states that formed an island territory in Singhbhum, dissociated from mainland Orissa. It was therefore decided to transfer Seraikella and Kharswan to Bihar on 18 May 1948 purely as a temporary expedient on the grounds

of administrative convenience. Jaipal was elated at the success of their demand and expressed so in his letter to the younger brother of the ruler of Seraikella.[118]

The ruler of Seraikella wrote to the Maharaja Nagendra Singh of the Ministry of Commerce in the Government of India, who had been deputed to make the transfer, in a private letter dated 23 May 1948 that he had no objection to the integration of Seraikella state with Bihar, temporarily. He, however, asserted in that letter that before any scheme of final integration of his state was made the people of the state and he should be consulted in an appropriate constitutional manner and nothing should be done without their consent.[119] Raja Aditya Pratap of Seraikella was convinced that he had made the right move for the ultimate success of the Eastern States Union.

However, very soon apparently the circumstances turned sour and Raja Aditya Pratap realised that the decision to integrate with Bihar was inappropriate. He met Mahtab and sought his help for returning to Orissa. This request was relayed to Patel by Mahtab on 23 June 1948 which however did not evoke any positive response from the Deputy Prime Minister.[120]

Meanwhile, the state of Mayurbhanj was passing through several hurdles in its administration. The dwindling treasury and the fear of the state going bankrupt, the tribal movement with an inclination towards Bihar gaining ground, campaign for integration with the West Bengal by a group, the emergence of a strong pro-Orissa merger elements in the region and the desire of the Mayurbhanj unit of the Congress to be identified with the Orissa provincial Congress instead of remaining associated with the local Praja Mandal were the principal factors that contributed to confusion in the administration. At this juncture the Orissa Legislative Assembly passed a resolution requesting the Central Government to take steps for the integration of Mayurbhanj. The Central Ministry of State also appreciated and suggested to the

Mayurbhanj administration in August 1948 to merge with Orissa. The Maharaja of Mayurbhanj signed the instrument of merger in New Delhi on 16 October 1948. On 1 January 1949, Mayurbhanj merged with Orissa.[121]

Soon after, a joint statement signed by the Premiers of Orissa, Central Provinces, Bengal and Bihar was issued on 8 April 1949 to the effect that they accepted Government of India's decision, in regard to the distribution of former native states constituting the Eastern States Agency.

Seraikella now witnessed the pro-Orissa activities intensifying both on the royal as well as on the people's front. The merger of Mayurbhanj immediately provided a direct link with Orissa province. Similarly, the joint pronouncement by the premiers instilled the apprehension in the minds of the Seraikella chief that the merger with Bihar was perhaps going to be permanent, a prospect with serious adverse consequences since Seraikella and Kharswan would be remote appendage in the province.

A delegation with the chief of Seraikella as the spokesman of the people of Seraikella and Kharswan met Patel in Dehradun on 16 May 1949 and pleaded with him for the retransfer of these two states to Orissa.[122] The chief of Seraikella followed this up with further representations to the Government of India for taking appropriate steps to endorse their wishes before the States Merger Order was announced.

The popular demand for a merger with Orissa also became vociferous and persistent. There was allegation that the Bihar government was attempting to suppress the Oriya culture and language in these states, was replacing the Oriya officers and the Oriya teachers by Hindi-speaking substitutes. The anti-Oriya campaign became stronger and more virulent with the release of the Governor-General's 'The States Merger (Governor's Provinces) Order – 1949' on 27 July 1949 announcing the decision of the Government of India for the merger of Seraikella and Kharswan with Bihar.

The Koshalotkal Praja Parishad's Good Will Mission under the leadership of the Maharaja of Patna toured these states from 28 to 31 July 1949 and collected evidences from the Oriya speaking people about their plight over the decision to be integrated with Bihar.[123] Through a pamphlet entitled 'Report of the Atrocities and Excesses committed by the Bihar Government in Seraikella and Kharswan States', an appeal was made by the local associations to the Government of India on 15 August 1949 to send an impartial committee of enquiry to restore law and order in the region, which was fast deteriorating. Bhupendra Narayan Singh Deo, the general secretary of Seraikella Praja Samity who until the recent past had taken the anti-Oriya stand was the main signatory in the Report. The other groups included M. Nanda, secretary, Seraikella States Congress Committee, Dhanu Majhi, Adivasi leader Seraikella state, Sumanta Nath Jyotishi, secretary, Seraikella Students Congress and Madhu Mukhya, member, working committee, Seraikella Harijana Sangha.[124]

On 22 August 1949, S.N. Bhanja Deo, the chief of Kanika who was then the opposition leader in the Orissa Legislative Assembly gave a press statement at Cuttack where he said that the situation in Seraikella and Kharswan states required immediate intervention of the Central Government for restoring peace and normalcy. He added that the spirit of narrow provincialism of the Government of Bihar was directed against the Oriya population there with the ultimate object of strangulating the Oriya language, culture and identity. He appealed to the Central Government to take over the administration of these areas immediately. Accompanied by B. K. Pani, secretary of the Utkal Congress Committee, Jadumani Mangaraj, joint secretary of the Utkal Union Conference and Rajballabh Misra, secretary Utkal Praja Parishad, S.N. Bhanja Deo visited these two states on the request of the resident Oriyas in order to gain a first hand account from the people.[125]

The Bihar government in its press note dated 12 September 1949 repudiated the allegation of any suppression of Oriya language and culture.[126] Following it, a rejoinder entitled, 'A Colossal Hoax' dated 25 September 1949 was published by Rajani Kant Satpathy, president Seraikella Congress refuting Bihar's statement.[127]

However, the Oriya agitation and pleadings had had no impact on the authorities. With the Constitution of India coming into force on 26 January 1950 Seraikella and Kharswan became an integral part of the province of Bihar. In July 1950, Seraikella appealed to the Supreme Court against the Merger Order of 1949, but the court did not find the stand sustainable.[128]

The States Reorganisation Commission (SRC): the Frustration

The Government of India set up a States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in 1953 to study the boundary of the provinces and to recommend re-adjustments if required.

The announcement rekindled hopes among the Oriyas for the amalgamation of their dismembered territories. The Government of Orissa prepared a memorandum by Radhanath Rath, then the Minister for finance, education and welfare and presented it to the SRC. Additionally, a number of other representations were also submitted to the SRC. Although claims were put forward in these notes about several Oriya-speaking territories in Midnapore, in Madhya Pradesh and in some pockets bordering the southern Orissa; the star case undoubtedly was that of the Singhbhum district, in particular Seraikella and Kharswan, the cynosure of all Oriyas.

Meanwhile, a new party, the Ganatantra Parishad, comprising mostly the former rulers, had come into being in Orissa and was already a major opposition party in the provincial legislature. The Ganatantra Parishad submitted to SRC a memorandum entitled, 'The Case for Transfer of the District of Singhbhum to Orissa' that provided a comprehensive picture of Orissa's historical,

geographical and cultural connection with Singhbhum. Commenting on the O'Donnell Committee's decision the note read, "...We are constrained to observe that the Committee was prejudiced against the Oriya claim and approached the question with its own predilections and thus was instrumental to an unjust vivisection of Oriya land."[129] The demand now included in the memorandum was for the integration of the entire Singhbhum district with the Orissa province. As regards the tribal population, it pointed out that in Orissa the tribes accounted for 25 percent of the total population after the integration of the princely states with Orissa, whereas in Bihar they constituted only 13.91%. Separating Singhbhum from Bihar and ceding it to Orissa therefore would not be against the interest of the tribal people as had been concluded by the O'Donnell Committee. It further argued that in case of Dhalbhum, if interested parties were unwilling to part with it because of the industrial town of Jamshedpur, then at least the southern region of Dhalbhum which was entirely Oriya speaking, should be transferred to Orissa.[130]

The SRC offered an opportunity for the rulers of the former princely states to assume key role in the politics of Orissa. As a party, the Ganatantra Parishad had won elections in several constituencies and was fast rising in stature. They now decided to revive the Utkal Union Conference (Utkala Sammilani) and took control of this one time National Assembly of the Oriyas. The president of the Ganatantra Parishad was the dynamic Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo, the former ruler of Patna, and a Member of Parliament. By leading the amalgamation movement the party aimed at achieving three goals simultaneously; the return of the dismembered Oriya-speaking tracts; winning Seraikella and Kharswan for Orissa that would earn them the confidence of the mass, and the isolation of the Congress in Orissa which would of course be a consequence of the first two.

Efforts were made to revitalise the Utkala Sammilani and elevate it to its former stature in order to strengthen the campaign in the outlying Oriya-speaking tracts. In Singhbhum two branches of the Utkala Sammilani were formed; the 'Dhalbhum Utkala Sammilani' with Mrutyunjaya Das, the lawyer from Narasinghgarh as the president and the 'Singhbhum Utkala Sammilani' with the Tikayat Nrupendra Narayan Singh Deo of Seraikella and the elder brother of Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo, as the president. These branches worked extensively in Singhbhum to unite the Oriya speaking population in the cause of the amalgamation with Orissa. The Dhalbhum branch also joined its counterpart in Midnapore to carry on the Oriya movement.[131]

Tikayat Nrupendra Narayan prepared a book entitled, 'Singhbhum, Seraikella and Kharswan–through the Ages' and presented it to the SRC. The historian Radha Kumud Mookerjee in the foreword of the book wrote, "It is to be hoped that the Commission appointed for the re-organization of the states of India on the basis of linguistic, cultural, economic and administrative considerations will go fully into the case of these two States for their incorporation in the state of Orissa in the light of the very relevant documents and material presented in the book."[132] The concluding lines of the book observed, "In Peace and Prosperity, in War and Adversity, in Calamity and Catastrophes, in Habits and Customs, in Ceremonies and Obsequies, in Hopes and Disappointments, in Dress and Demeanor, in Culinary and Coiffure, in Dance and Drama, in Art and Literature, the people of Seraikella-Kharswan-Singhbhum express themselves in the same way and in same details as their brethren in Orissa."[133] The Oriyas all over shared similar sentiments with regard to Singhbhum when they presented their case before the SRC.

The Singhbhum students and teachers living in Cuttack formed a 'Singhbhumi Students Union.' Bibekananda Pati, the Principal

of Radhanath Training College was the president of the Union; he compiled a memorandum and presented it to the SRC on behalf of the Union.[134]

In Seraikella, a public meeting was called under the auspices of the Singhbhum Utkala Sammilani on 7 February 1954. R. N. Singh Deo came to preside the meeting as well as to attend the Subhendra Jayanti which was celebrated in the month of February.[135]He was accompanied by the Kalahandi Maharaja, Pratap Keshari Deo who was the deputy leader of the opposition in the Orissa Assembly. Godavaris Misra who had joined the Ganatantra Parishad came along with Shyam Sunder Mishra, member of the Servants of India Society, for the occasion and also to strengthen the Oriya movement in Singhbhum on the eve of the enquiry by the SRC. R.N. Singh Deo addressed the public, exhorted them to organise themselves for the amalgamation movement and to represent their case strongly before the SRC.

Halfway through the meeting hired hooligans, alleged to be from Bihar, unleashed violence on the congregation. The Maharaja of Kalahandi as well as several people who had gathered sustained serious injury; they needed immediate medical care. The subsequent meetings at Gamharia, Rajnagar, Keraikella and Kharswan had to be cancelled.[136]The Bihar Chief Minister made a statement in the Bihar Assembly on 15 february 1954 articulating the Government version of the incident at the Seraikella meeting. Commenting on the same, R.N.Singh Deo characterised the Bihar C.M.'s version as 'partisan and propagandist.' Messages were wired to the President, Prime Minister, Home Minister and to all the prominent news papers as well as to the Governors and Chief Ministers of Bihar and Orissa on 8 February 1954; they alleged, "...The inhabitants of this area cannot represent their case freely before the States Reorganisation Commission unless the area is brought under the administration of the union Government and the people are vouchsafed those conditions of freedom under

which alone it would be possible for the citizens of this area to represent their case."[137] A pamphlet entitled, 'Rape of Democracy' was published by him through the Utkala Sammilani and was distributed among the Members of the Parliament.

As a rejoinder to the statements made by R. N. Singh Deo, a monograph on 'Facts about Seraikella and Kharswan' was prepared by Baladeva Sahay, president, Bihar Association that countered the justification of the Oriya claim for the de-merger of Seraikella and Kharswan, which then formed a sub-division of the district of Singhbhum in the Chotanagpur Division of Bihar.[138] Referring to the incident of 7 February 1954, he wrote, "Whatever the truth might be, the significance of what took place is clear, i.e., the pro-merger element is led from outside, and that the local people were out to frustrate the stage-shows and manoeuvres of the Oriya pro-mergers."[139]

The chief of Seraikella wrote to K.N. Katju about the attempt made to injure him in a public meeting on 15 December 1953 and about the alleged conspiracy to implicate him by putting pressure on the leader of the Oriya movement in Singhbhum, Rudra P. Sarangi who was then an under trial prisoner in the Chaibasa jail. He also mentioned about 7 February, 1954 incident and requested the Central Minister to set up an enquiry committee to investigate the anti-Oriya campaign by the Bihar government.[140]

The formation of the SRC revived the conflicting territorial interests of the three neighbouring provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and generated a good deal of bitterness among the leaders of these regions. Bengal claimed some bordering territories from Bihar such as Manbhum, Santal Parganas and also portions of Purnea.[141] Oriya leaders were lured with the promise that if they supported Bengal in her claims on Dhalbhum, Bengal would make it sure that Seraikella and Kharswan and also the Singhbhum Sadar went to Orissa.[142] The Dhalbhum Oriyas, especially the

Brahmins of the 'Sasana' village who had been very active during the SRC vehemently opposed this tactic.[143]

Bihar campaigned against the claims of Bengal and Orissa. The tribal issue was projected as the key point; the tribal people were told that whether in Bengal or in Orissa, they would have to learn another language in addition to their mother tongue and Hindi. Bihar also dismissed the Oriya claim on the Singhbhum Sadar as a closed chapter as per the decision of the O'Donnell Committee. Consequently, they pointed out that should Seraikella and Kharswan be transferred to Orissa, these regions would face immense difficulties to be in touch with the headquarters in Orissa, in view of the circuitous and long route and bad road system.[144] Being in control of the administration over the region, it was not difficult for the Bihar provincial machineries to marginalise the Oriya agitation. In the mean time, Jaipal's Jharkhand Party was a force to reckon with and was carrying on vigorous agitation for a separate province. The interest of Seraikella and Kharswan would have been adversely affected by the same as well.

The SRC Report was released in October 1955 and immediately sent shock waves through out the Oriya-speaking world. The Report did not have any positive offer for Orissa; the most frustrating being the refusal to re-transfer Seraikella and Kharswan. The Chief Minister stated in the Orissa Assembly that the recommendations of the SRC were of a great danger for Orissa.[145] The Orissa Assembly also resolved its formal disapproval and requested the Government for reconsideration.

Moving a motion in the Lok Sabha, R. N. Singh Deo said on 23 December 1955, "...The SRC Report is more political than judicious. Its chief characteristics are lack of clear principles, policy of appeasement of the strong and influential, neglecting the claims of the weak and its recommendations are vitiated apart from the fact that it is full of inconsistencies and

contradictions...Our main grievance is that it has not only dismissed Orissa's claims on most superficial and unreasonable grounds, it has not only summarily rejected our claims, but it has completely ignored even to consider our claims." He pointed out that Commission had done a blatant injustice to Orissa by denying even an inch of land to her, ". . . For God's sake, please do not drive the people of Orissa and the Oriya speaking tracts to take to the agitational approach for redress of their grievances . . ."[146] B.C. Das from Ganjam pointed out in the same motion that "...The SRC has laid much stress on the O'Donnell Committee report, but ignores the limitations under which the report was written. There was at that time no formal Government to put up the case of Orissa. There were other provincial governments which put every spoke on the wheel to release as little of their territory as possible. The Congress was boycotting the Committee and outside the Congress there were not many Oriya leaders of eminence to put up the Orissa case. The regions claimed by Oriyas were officered by non-Oriyas who came from the majority language groups which had acquired vested interests in the Oriya regions. In such circumstances all relevant facts could not be brought before the O'Donnell Committee, so whatever Orissa got was the minimum that could be spared to it."[147] He suggested therefore setting up a boundary commission to examine Orissa's claim on Seraikella and Kharswan and the Sadar sub division of Singhbhum; Phuljhar and other predominantly Oriya areas in Madhya Pradesh and certain other portions of southern areas such as a part of Mandasa, Jalantra, Budharsing and Udayakahand.

On 18 January 1956, after probing into the SRC report thoroughly by a high level four member committee headed by the Prime Minister himself, the Government of India made the final verdict with no change in its decision on Orissa. In its paragraph 625, the SRC Report said, "language by itself does not, in our opinion, provide sufficient justification for breaking up a district,"

and, "above all, in view of the recommendations which we make for the transfer of part of the Manbhum District to West Bengal, the transfer of the Seraikella subdivision, or any part there of, to the state of Orissa will convert the Dhalbhun subdivision in the east into an enclave which will not be physically contiguous to the rest of Bihar."

This decision of compensating Bengal and minimising the damage to Bihar distressed the Oriyas.

The provincial Congress Working Committee resolved, "...While still appealing to the public in and outside Orissa to pursue peaceful and constitutional methods for the redress of our grievances, the Committee after careful consideration of the issues at stake, feel its imperative duty to register its emphatic protest against the injustice that is sought to be perpetuated against Orissa by rejecting her minimum claims . . . the Committee feels that it will not be possible to hold any office of trust and responsibility by the members of Congress on its behalf."[148] The Orissa ministry headed by Nabakrishna Choudhury along with the provincial Congress president Biswanath Das went to Delhi carrying resignation letters.[149]

Confident of the support of the ruling party, the Congress leaders all over Orissa called upon the general public including the students to join the protest against the report, especially its decision against the Seraikella and Kharswan. On 19 January 1956, there were violent demonstrations in Puri. The fire spread; there were picketing and strikes all over the province of Orissa. Sambalpur, Mayurbhanj, Ganjam all went through massive public demonstrations. During this short lived 'Boundary Agitation' that lasted from 19 January 1956 to 27 January 1956, there were wide spread violence, firing and three persons were killed in police firing in Cuttack and Puri.[150]In the public mind, the repressive measures by the administration was likened to the atrocities witnessed in the erstwhile princely states such as Dhenkanal where Baji Rout had succumbed to the police firing.

The Orissa Ministry that had announced its resignation, however, continued in office with orders from the Prime Minister. Consequently, it had the responsibility to control the agitation that was largely its own creation.[151] This was a dilemma for the Orissa Congress; it even attempted to cover up its initial stand of protest against the report.[152]

The strong measures that the Government of Orissa adopted in order to restore law and order provided an opportunity for the opposition to exploit and gain popular support at the expense of the ruling Congress Party. The later phase of the 'Boundary Agitation' was in a way marked by the ascendancy of the opposition, led by Ganatantra Parishad. The latter convened a session of the Utkala Sammilani at Cuttack during 25-26 January 1956 and passed a resolution demanding a Judicial Tribunal or a plebiscite for deciding on the re-positioning of the contested areas.[153]

There were vociferous arguments and counter arguments on the floors of the Orissa Assembly and in the media even after the agitation subsided. The ruling party was accused of inefficiency and betrayal; the opposition for instigating violence. The Home Minister of India held the erstwhile rulers of the Orissa states responsible for the anarchy prevailing in the province.[154] The moot point however remained that, the SRC did not bring any change to the territorial outlines of Orissa that would have cheered up the people of the province.

As far as Congress was concerned, its image in Orissa as a wide based, unchallenged party seemed to have suffered immeasurably following the SRC. In the Assembly elections of 1957, Congress could win only 56 seats, closely followed by the Ganatantra Parishada with 51 seats in a house with 144 total members. Acutely short of an absolute majority, Mahtab could form the Ministry in Orissa only when some non-Congress members supported him. Ironically, he sought and received

assistance from his arch rival on the border issue on Singhbhum (especially Seraikella and Kharswan), i.e. Jaipal Singh Munda. The five Jharkhand Party Members elected to the Orissa Legislative Assembly from Mayurbhanj and Sundargarh were allowed to support the Congress Party in the Assembly.

There was a clear signal that the influence of Congress in Orissa was sliding. Further, Orissa's position on the national political scenario, in particular within the Congress organisation, was still only minimal.

Tail Piece

The political dissolution of the princedom in Orissa did not erase the social ethos evolved over centuries in the land that once was the princely states. Several customs, traditions and ceremonies connecting the former rulers with their people lived on.

The traditions that began in the early years of the millennium among the indigenous people living in the jungle land took on a definitive structure and form with time and contributed to the emergence of a socio-political identity of the group. Both the rulers and subjects participated intensely in this process of evolution. In this set-up, the chief was placed on a high pedestal by the people who owed their allegiance to him. On his part, the ruler, in addition to safeguarding the sovereignty of the state, also provided full protection for his people; for doing so, he deployed a force that comprised men from among the subjects. This often earned the ruler the sobriquet, 'ma baap' from his people. In most instances the tribal principal divinity was made the state deity and one of the main ethnic ceremonies was elevated to the status of a state level festival. In some cases the prince would marry a tribal girl and give her the prime status among queens. All these exercise helped the ruler forge a relationship, based on the love-loyalty bond of confidence and trust, with his subjects that stood the test of time.

Under the British however, the kinship between rulers and their people showed signs of strain. Although there could be varied reasons for the same, the prime cause appeared to be the fire power, assured from the British, which created a sense of awe amongst the mass and slowly alienated the rulers from their own subjects. Kalahandi Maharaja Pratap Keshari Deo who was the ruler at the time of the merger, expressed a similar view when he wrote, "In the thirties... their (rulers') survival depended more on the British help rather than their people's goodwill. Most of them had lost their qualities of inherent natural leadership."[155] In addition, with their supercilious attitude of discharging the white man's burden, the British interfered with many of the prevalent practices with arrogance. This seemed to upset the harmony of the tribal society; also a factor in damaging the equilibrium between the rulers and the ruled.

Nevertheless, most of the cultural traditions relating to literature, dance, music and art continued to prosper in the states during the British period under the patronage of the rulers. Thus, the Oriya Lexicon, the 'Purnachandra Bhasakosa', compiled by Gopal Chandra Praharaj and considered a monumental work and an epitome of renaissance of the Oriya language, was possible because of the generous support from Maharaja P.C. Bhanja Deo of Mayurbhanj in the thirties of the twentieth century. Similarly, the Bamanda chief, Raja Basudev Sudhal Dev not only published the 'Sambalpur Hitaisini', he also patronised several eminent men of letters such as Radhanath Ray, Phakirmohan Senapati, Gangadhar Meher, Chintamani Mohanty, Madhusudan Tarka-Vachaspati, Neelamani Vidyaratna. He was himself a writer of repute and his creations included 'Chitrotpala', 'Alankara-bodhadaya' among others. The rulers of many other states were also gifted literary persons and had high class creations to their credit. For example, Natabar Bhramarbara Ray, raja of Khandapara wrote 'Krushnakalpalata', 'Krushnabiraha Chautisa' in the 19th

century. Raja Kisorechandra Harichandan Singhadeb of Talcher (1880-1915)wrote 'Bayasa Duta', 'Bikshipta Chatani' and the like.[156] Raja Udit Narayan Singh Deo of Seraikella published 'Udit Narayan Granthavali' in 1922. Seraikella also witnessed some high calibre women writers and painters from the royal family.[157]

On the socio-political front, the royalty in the states of Orissa strengthened their confederacy by entering into matrimonial alliances with their group of states. The more influential among them, in order to be a part of the all India image, set up marriages with the prominent royal houses of India; example being Seraikella entering into matrimonial alliance with Patiala in 1933. Some of the princes also chose to take an active part in the Hindu Mahasabha at the national level. Although earlier considered backward, the princely states of Orissa thus began enjoying prominence in the all India scene by the thirties and were increasingly assuming positions of decision making on issues relating to the entire princely order in India. They participated at the Round Table Conference. Nearer home, in the Rajkumar College at Raipur where the princes from several states studied, the chiefs from Orissa states wielded a great deal of influence because of the wide ranging support they provided to the institution. Admission of a large number of them as members in the Chamber of Princes fulfilled their "aspirations in being placed in the same footing with other big States in various parts of India."[158] Receiving good university education, the princes of Orissa were emerging as elites in the all India community.

The disappointing feature, however, was that in spite of the elevated status and the apparent enlightened background, many of the rulers turned out to be autocrats and perpetrated hierarchical discriminations and stratifications in their states. For instance, 'Jatan Nagar' of Dhenkanal; the massive 'stone wall' around the Rani Park of Talcher and several others became the epitome and symbol of despicable human exploitation. In a way,

it was in the process of agitating for redressing the people's grievances against the rulers, that the second leg of the Oriya union movement received a strong fillip.

It is worth noting that the merger of the princely states in India, which had not been planned in advance, started in the Orissa region. Orissa was thus destined to lead the process of the liquidation of the princely states, in addition to having pioneered the formation of province on linguistic basis in the country.

The princely order had to come to an end in Orissa not only because of the fact that they had earned notoriety through their dark rules, although this expedited the process of fall. The location of these states at the heart of the province of Orissa also made their political dissolution inevitable. Further, Orissa being the first province formed on linguistic basis, the continuance of a separate identity for the Oriya speaking princely states would not have been in consonance with the proclaimed policy. Last but not the least, the dissolution was also a natural adjunct to the establishment of democracy and it had to come sooner or later in Orissa.

Nevertheless, the transition process of merger in Orissa did not go through a democratic procedure. The people in the states felt that the negotiation for transition signed on 14 December 1947 was the most undemocratic method, for the people of the states were not even allowed to participate through their representatives. And, "the proposals of the Government of India were placed before the princes in such a manner that they had no alternative (but) to accept them" commented the USA Ambassador, New Delhi.[159]

Like all changes, the transition from princedom was not smooth and the rulers went through a traumatic experience. Many of them had done a great service to the cause of the Oriya language and culture as well as for the uplift of the poorer sections. The contribution of these states towards the progress of Oriya

education was significant.[160] Therefore, they felt slighted when their contribution was going unnoticed; in their view it was all politically motivated by individual leaders. For example, Sonepur Maharaja's donation of one crore of rupees to the Sonepur Trust, the interest of which was to be spent on the welfare of the people and the Sonepur Chair donated to the Calcutta University for post graduate study in Oriya, were re-named dropping the name of Sonepur.[161] Even today, the current generation of the princes of the former states speak with a wounded feeling[162] about the much hated telegram by the state Administrators to the Orissa Premier, Mahtab, on 1 January 1948 that triumphantly proclaimed, "conquest completed and annexation peaceful..."

In a way, the human face of the political change was absent in many instances.

Interestingly, the people of the states also did not subscribe entirely to the full takeover and the loss of the status; the exercise was seen as comparable only to the fascist annexation of the states in Europe.

A shift in paradigm came with the elections when several former rulers took part as candidates and got elected by an electorate comprising the same people who had once rebelled against them. Indeed, some of the elected members of the former royalty held very prominent public positions (R.N. Singh Deo of Bolangir-Patna was the Chief Minister) in the government.

As far as the integration of the cultures in the princely states and in the mainland Orissa was concerned, the blending has been quite spontaneous; in the process some distinctive styles in art and culture have emerged. For example, the Chhau dance tradition of Mayurbhanj, and a large number of folk traditions such as Ghumra dance of Kalahandi have now become a part of the repertoire of performing art of Orissa. The oral traditions of the jungle terrain enhanced the uniqueness of the Orissan culture. The states also had their distinct traditions in art and craft based

on local materials such as rocks, minerals and diverse forest products; these have now spread across the province. For example, brass utensils from Khandapara; soap stone utensils from Bonai and Nilgiri; the ivory work and the 'dhokra' casting from Dhenkanal and Nayagarh; silk and cotton textiles and sarees from Sonepur are held with great esteem and pride in the entire province of Orissa.

From a larger perspective, one finds that territorial enlargement of the province is not the only major outcome from the merger of princely states; of equal significance is the one relating to the harmonisation of diverse traditions and the blossoming of an enriched cultural heritage, which is the main identity of Orissa today.

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A Class category whose revenue was above Rs.6, 00,000/– per annum included the following eleven states:

Bamra
Baud
Dhenkanal
Gangpur
Kalahandi
Keonjhar
Mayurbhanj (Rs. 41,32,000/-, the highest)
Nayagarh (Rs. 6,04,000 /-, the lowest)
Patna
Sonepur
Seraikella

B Class whose revenue was between Rs.2,00,000/- to Rs.6,00,000/– per annum included the following twelve:

Athagarh
Athmallik
Baramba (the lowest)
Bonai
Daspalla
Hindol
Khandapara
Kharswan

Narasinghpur
Nilgiri
Redhakhol
Talcher (the highest)
C Class whose revenue was between Rs. 95,000 /- to Rs. 2,00,000/– included the following three:
Tigiria (lowest for Tigiria)
Pallahara
Ranpur (highest for Ranpur)

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140.Letters by A.P. Singh Deo to Dr. K.N. Katju, Minister of Home Affairs and States, Government of India, D.O. NO.M-I/54-18 dated the 12th March, 1954; D.O.No.M-I/54-13 dated the 18th February, 1954; D.O.NO.C. /53-374 dated 23rd December, 1953. The letter dated the 23rd December enclosed the letter of Rudra P. Sarangi addressed to Bhudku from the Chaibasa jail on 21,11,1953 saying, "... On the 9th the A.D.C. met me in the jail gate and tried to induce me to write against Maharaja, Mihir

Kabi and Pasani Nana... he called me (again later) to his chamber and repeated the same version and offered me money, good job and withdrawal of all the cases pending against me by way of inducement. But if the Bihar Government hang me, still I cannot betray the Orissa movement. I may die but the whole world will know one day that Singhbhum Dist. belongs to Orissa. I know that for Orissa movement I am in jail but still I cannot write anything false against those who are hoisting the flag of Orissa movement, even at the cost of my life." (Private Papers, Seraikella Palace).

141.Sahay, Baldev, *Claims of West Bengal and Orissa on Territories of Bihar X'Rayed*, p.1.

142.Ibid., p.32.

143.Personal interview with the Sasana Brahmins in their village in Baharagora, Dhalbhum.

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145.Motion on Address by the Governor, 29th February, 1956, *Orissa Legislative Assembly Proceedings*, vol. VIII- No.3, p.34.

146.Report of SRC., *Lok Sabha Debate, 23 December 1955*, pp.1289-1298.

147.Ibid., pp. 1581-1585.

148.Motion on Address by the Governor, 29th February, 1956, *Orissa Legislative Assembly Proceedings*, vol. VIII -No3, p.23.

149.Samaj, 19.1.1956.

150.Motion on Address by the Governor, op.cit., pp. 19-65.

151.Ibid., p. 18.

152.Ibid., p. 24.

153.Ibid., p.19.

154.Ibid., p.51.
155.Deo, P.K., op.cit., p. 48.
156.Mahapatra Sarma, Sridhar, op.cit., pp. 286-288.
157.Singh Deo, N.N., op.cit., p. 107.
158.*Letter of A.P.Singh Deo, Seraikella, to Lt.Col. L.E. Burton,* Resident for the Eastern States, Calcutta, No. CP. 7-S.P/ 40-/53, Seraikella, July 15, 1940 (Private Papers, Seraikella Palace).
159.Copland, Ian, op. cit., p.271.
160.*Samaj*, 21.9.1943.
161.Deo, P.K.,op.cit.,p.130.
162.Interview with the ex-royalty of Kalahandi, Dhenkanal, Nilgiri, Seraikella and Kharswan.

Appendix I

Map of Orissa Province and the Princely States- 1936

(Courtesy: Orissa State Archives, Bhubaneswar.)

THE PROVINCE OF ORISSA.
Scale. 1" - 60 Miles
Year 1936.

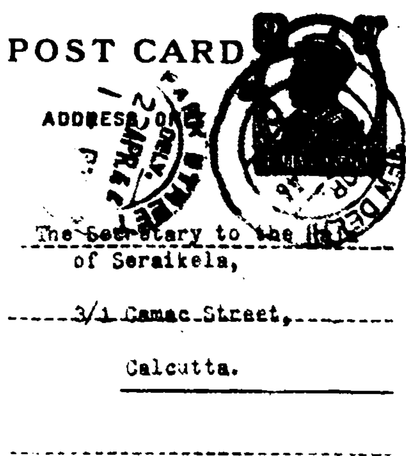
REFERENCE
STATE BOUNDARY
PROVINCE BOUNDARY
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
RAILWAYS LINE

BIHAR
BENGAL
BAY OF BENGAL
CENTRAL PROVINCES
BASTAR
EASTERN STATE
EAST GODABARI
VIZAGAPATAM
GANJAM
CUTTACK
BALASORE
PURI
SAMBALPUR
KORAPUT
SINGHBHUM
RANCHI
SARAIKELA



Appendix II

Pyarelal's letter on behalf of Gandhi to the Secretary of the Raja Seraikella (Courtesy: Private Papers, Seraikella Palace)


POST CARD

ADDRESS ONLY

The Secretary to the Raja
of Seraikela,

3/1 Camac Street,

Calcutta.

Valmiki Mandir,
Reading Road,
New Delhi, 19-4-'46.

Dear Friend,

I had your wire of the 18th inst. in which you say that the Rajas of Seraikella and Korea would like to have an interview with Gandhiji at an early date after the 27th inst. In reply I am to say that he is of opinion that in this connection they should see Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who is the proper authority to be consulted on the question of the Indian States.

Yours sincerely,

Pyarelal

Appendix III (a)
Letter from Dr. B.C.Roy to Raja A.P.Singh Deo of Seraikella
(Courtesy: Private Papers, Seraikella Palace)

36, WELLINGTON STREET.
CALCUTTA.

23rd May, 1946.

My dear Raja Sahib,

I have not yet received any reply from Delhi very likely because I wrote to Parelal when he had already left Gandhijee. However, I have not been idle, meanwhile, I am sending you copies of 2 noteswhich have been sent to me by the Ministry of Orrissa confidentially. I wonder what your reactionsto them are.

I would like to help you if possible.

Please see that these 2 statements are kept confidential.

Yours sincerely,
B C Roy

Encl: 2 Copies.

Appendix III (b)
Letter from Raja A.P.Singh Deo of Seraikellea to Dr. B.C.Roy
(Courtesy: Private Papers, Seraikella Palace)

Confidential.

Seraikella,
The 29th. May, 1946.

My dear Dr. Roy,

I have received your letter of the 23rd. May with enclosure.

I shall thank you to let me know the appointment when you know about it from Sree Pearylal.

I have seen the note of Mr.Kanungo which however does not record the correct views entertained by the Rulers. I am enclosing herewith a copy of my reply to Mr. Mahtab which incorporates consensus of opinion entertained by us.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

A P Singh

Dr. B. C. Roy, M.R.C.P.,F.R.CS.,
36, Wellington Street,Calcutta.

Appendix IV

Letter from the Raja Ramanuj P.Singh of Korea to Raja A.P. Sing Deo of Seraikella (Courtesy: Private Papers, Seraikella Palace)



Confidential to Secretariat ...

Ramanuj Vilas,
Korea State,
Baikunthpur.
Camp Hotel Mount Everest
Darjeeling.
4th June 1946.

My dear Raja Saheb,

Many thanks for your kind letter dated the 19th May 46. I am grateful to you for having shifted the date of interview with Mahatma Gandhi. I shall be back in Korea by about the 20th instt and would be ready to leave for the proposed interview any time after the 25th June on hearing from you.

I think we must meet Pandit Nehru also particularly as his position as the President of the States Peoples' Conference will largely shape the attitude and the programme of the States people. He is also now the President elect of the Congress. But we have no authority from the Rulers to see him. It would not easily be possible to secure the authority of all the Rulers or even of those who participated at the recent Calcutta meeting and as this is an unexceptionable matter I suggest that you may obtain the anthority of the Raja Saheb of Baudh, the President of our Council.

You may be aware that Mr Neogy has now come back from America and we might consider the advisability of taking him with us if he has no objection. If you think proper you might sound him on this point.

Hope this will find you in perfect health.

With kind regards,

Yours Sincerely
[illegible]

Shriman Raja Sahab Bahadur of Saraikela.
Saraikela.

2/18

Appendix V

Letter from Maharaja P.K. Deo of Kalahandi to Raja A.P.Singh Deo of Seraikella (Courtesy: Private Papers, Seraikella Palace)



Secret

Bhawani Patna.

The 3/5 1966

My dear Uncle,

Please refer to your letter D/ the 29th April marked 'Top secret'. As suggested by Mr. Pyarelal we shall have to contact with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. To meet him we will have to send a batch of young rulers who are thinking in terms of modern times. I suggest that Maharaja Patna should be in that batch. As our meeting with Panditjee is going to take place in order to feel his pulse & get a first hand view of his [illegible] make states, one answer should be non-committal & specially when we are not authorised by all the states to meet him. After you the [illegible]

making takes place, I shall be delighted if I am kept in touch with all the latest developments that accrue.

We are keeping good health. Hope it will meet you all in the enjoyment of excellent health?

With my respectful pranams to you & the elders.

affectionately yours

[illegible]

Appendix VI (a)

Letters from Raja A.P.Singh Deo of Seraikella to Mr. H. Mahatab, the Premier of Orissa (Courtesy: Private Papers, Seraikella Palace)

Seraikella
Dated the 20th May, 1946.

D.O. No. C.P. 10-8.P/46-115.

Dear Mr. Mahatab,

Many thanks for your D.O. letter No. 49(19)HPM of the 9th May, 1946.

Certain Press reports about your efforts for amalgamation of Orissa States with the Province and certain news comments particularly one which appeared in New Orissa in April, 1946 coupled with an effort to foment agitations in the States had created the gravest misgiving in the minds of the Rulers of Orissa States and elsewhere.

The past history of the States and the Province will vouchsafe a cordial relationship in many efforts which went to contribute to the well-being of the Orissan people. The contribution of the Rulers to the establishment of many administrative institutions and their co-operation in the sphere of culture are too numerous to be mentioned. The States also take pride in the fact that when the very culture of Orissa and its script was at the brink of subterfuge on account of aggressive provincialism the contribution of the Rulers of the time was able to prevent the catastrophe. Their co-operation in the establishment of the Utkal University and the Mahanadi Scheme, etc. is of most recent origin and must be fresh in our minds.

The States therefore, hardly expected of a hostile attitude in any kind or form from any quarters particularly from the Provincial Congress Organisation in Orissa contrary to the good neighbourly policy followed in other parts of India.

I hope your attention has been drawn to the news that His Highness the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes has been negotiating with the Congress High Command with regard to the position of the States including those in the Eastern India, in the future constitution of India and that the outcome of which so far been very cordial and encouraging.

It has been very unfortunate that when matters of such paramount importance were being discussed between the States and the Congress, and specially when the contribution of the Princes has gone to a great extent in the establishment of an independent India, there would have appeared in papers certain unhappy statement which instead of contributing towards the success of the negotiations, mostly created misgivings in the minds of the Rulers. I therefore, very much appreciate your letter which purports to elucidate your view points and that you do not desire amalgamation or absorption of the States in the Province.

However, for the successful prosecution of the negotiation between the State Authorities and the Congress it would be most desirable for parties concerned to create a favourable atmosphere of good-will and cordility and re-establish it where it has been marred. I, therefore, feel that it would greatly help the success of the negotiation if the unhappy statements finding place in papers are contradicted publicly and officially and that the agitations if any started in the States need be withdrawn in our mutual interests.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- A.P. Singh.
Raja of Seraikella.

Mr. H. Mahatab, Chief Minister,
Orissa, Cuttack.

Appendix VI (b)

Letters from Raja A.P.Singh Deo of Seraikella to Mr. H. Mahatab, the Premier of Orissa (Courtesy: Private Papers, Seraikella Palace)

D.O.No.

Seraikella,
30th. May, 1946.

Dear Mr. Mahatab,

I am in receipt of your D.O. No.121/HPM/46 of the 23rd. May, 1946.

I very much regret that my letter under reference has been completely misunderstood. Being a party to the Chamber of Princes' Declaration of Fundamental Rights of the people, I am second to none in standing for free expression of opinion. I never suggested to you to control the comments of the Press and expression of opinion by others in the Province with regard to the States, far less a request for invocation a law to stop their free expression. I simply informed you that your statement regarding amalgamation of States with the Province has been misunderstood by those who look to you for guidance as well as the Rulers of the States. You mentioned in your letter No.49(19)HPM of the 10th. May that you do not desire an amalgamation of the States with the Province and in your present letter under reference you further assure that we should not be under an illusion that in the interest of the Province you are trying to rope in the States and that in the interest of the States themselves you suggest their combination with the Provinces. I therefore suggested that for the interest of the parties concerned a favourable atmosphere of goodwill and cordiality should be created and re-established where it has been marred and requested you to contradict publicly and officially the misconstruction by the people of your views as intimated to the Rulers, Since such an action will greatly help in the successful prosecution of the negotiations between H. H. the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and the Congress High Command at the present moment.

Since you desire co-ordination or co-operation in the field of administration as against amalgamation is it too much to expect from you a public announcement of your views accordingly ?

You have incidentally referred that there is something inherent in the circumstances prevailing in the States which provides for agitations. There is difference of opinion to this view. Since you are not concerned with that now, it would not be proper for me to enter into a discussion. The States are dealing their problems realistically. The States are doing their best to modernise their administration and offer social amenities as well as invite association of their people in the administration, as a result of which a great strides have been made in recent years and may legitimately claim grater progress in certain spheres than those in the adjoining areas.

The declaration of the Chamber of Princes of the Fundamental Rights of the People will reflect the attitude of the Rulers and their approach to the problems. It would therefore not be fair to indict them to be blind to the changing times.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- A. P. Singh.
Raja of Seraikella.

Appendix VII

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Raja A.P.Singh Deo of Seraikella

(Courtesy: Private Papers, Seraikella Palace)

17, York Road,
New Delhi,
31st May, 1947.

My dear Raja Sahib,

Thank you for your letter of May 24th. There appears to be some misunderstanding in your letter about our position in regard to the States. What are the States, the Rulers or the people? It is and has been always our position that whether in the States or in the rest of India the people come foremost and everything else is second. We have gone out very far in trying to protect the interests of Rulers provided these do not conflict with those of the people. The Rulers of most of the States seem to be completely oblivious of what is happening in India and in the world. On no account and whatever happens, we are not going to leave the people in the lurch. We shall at the same time try to accommodate the Rulers. If, however, the Rulers adopt an attitude hostile to their people, then it is not our fault if their position is weakened.

The times are too serious for long argument. Big decisions have to be made in the next few months and there may be a great deal of conflict in India. It seems to me amazing and scandalous that some of the Rulers of Indian States at this grave juncture in India's history should forget the good of India and the good of their people and ally themselves with reactionary forces. But I am glad to say that only a few are doing so.

I'm afraid it is difficult for me to suggest a course of studies in foreign countries for your son Sudhendra. It is difficult for any Indian to get admission in any good college or institute in foreign countries at present as they are absolutely full up. Normally I would strongly advise against an Indian going now to England for studies. The only places which probably suit now would be somewhere in the Continent

-2-

Continent of Europe. That would mean learning the language of the country.

I enclose a small note of appreciation of the Chhau dancers.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru

Raja Aditya Pratap Singh Deo,
Raja of Seraikella,
Seraikella.

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Index

The book analyses and puts in perspective the birth and growth of Oriya nationalism that constitutes a major aspect of the modern Orissan history. Orissa came under the British in 1803 and the symptoms of Oriya nationalism became well discernible around 1866. These signs slowly but steadily grew into a phenomenon embracing the whole of the Oriya land. The culmination came about in 1936 when most of the Oriya-speaking areas were constituted into a separate administrative province Orissa; however the wishes of several outlying areas to be amalgamated still remained unfulfilled The first edition of the book published in 1982 encompassed the development upto this point. Subsequently, the process of integration of the Orissa princely states impacted the Oriya movement a great deal , therefore a new chapter, 'Formation of an Enlarged Orissa: Merger of the Princely States' has been added in the present edition. The saga of Oriya nationalism as covered in this volume would now span twenty more years, i.e. till 1956, which would witness the final phase of the quest for a united Orissa in the twentieth century.

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